

Bavarian News

Vol 4. Nr. 20

U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Bamberg, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch

October 15, 2008

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The long road home...

Family, community welcomes home the first redeployed 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment Soldiers as they conclude the final phase of a 15-month deployment to Iraq.



Photo by Sgt. Stephen Morgan

Rose Barracks (Vilseck) fences have been draped in banners, flags, and yellow ribbons for weeks in anticipation of the return of 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment Soldiers. The first wave of 2SCR troops returned last week. / **Related Story: Reintegration Tips for Couples - Page 3**

Community welcomes first wave of 2SCR Soldiers

by MARY MARKOS

Bavarian News

Clutching a balloon that floated twice as high as she is tall, 3-year-old Briana Melton, her mother, and about 100 friends and family members gathered at the Vilseck Hilltop Memorial Gym Oct. 8 for the redeployment of 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment Soldiers.

The event, which welcomed home 50 Soldiers, marked the first of many 2SCR homecomings as the unit returns home in waves from a 15-month deployment to Iraq.

Briana's father, Cpt. Marc Melton, Headquarters

& Headquarters Troop, 4th Squadron, entered the gym with his comrades to a wave of flags, tears, and cheers.

In addition to loved ones, U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr and Joint Multinational Training Command leadership were in attendance to show their support.

About 4,000 2SCR Soldiers deployed in August 2007 as the first normal rotational unit following the Iraq War troop surge. During the deployment, they conducted operations in Baghdad, East Rashid, Sadr City, Abu Ghraib, Haifa Street District, Taji, Mosul

and Diyala Province.

Cpt. Luke Zeck, the rear detachment public affairs officer, said that while in East Rashid, 2SCR units cleared the area of more than 100 al-Qaeda in Iraq fighters and more than 100 improvised explosive devices.

Zeck said throughout the deployment, Vilseck troops conducted the joint planning and execution of operations involving 30,000 Iraqi Security. 2SCR Soldiers eliminated more than \$2 million dollars in excess and waste after occupation of and improvements

See 2SCR Page 23

TRICK-OR-TREAT?



Garrisons hosting wide variety of Halloween, Harvest Fest events

by ADRIANE FOSS

Editor

Living abroad doesn't mean missing out on traditional American holidays, like Halloween.

And it doesn't mean foregoing traditional safety measures.

U.S. Army Garrison Safety Director Michael Schwarz urged parents to pay attention to children's costumes and motorists to stay alert during trick-or-treating hours.

"The most common Halloween injuries are trips and falls," he said. "You

don't want to wear masks that obscure vision or costumes that will cause trips."

Schwarz said parents should ensure a responsible person accompanies trick-or-treaters under age 12 as children darting out from parked cars and walking along roadways increase driving hazards for motorists.

To help curb the risks, Grafenwoehr's Military Police will station patrol cars with emergency flashing lights at Netzaberg and on-post housing areas. Parents and children can visit the patrols to get free glow sticks

for use during Halloween.

Some of the Halloween and Harvest Fests events kicking off at U.S. Army garrisons throughout Europe include:

■ ANSBACH:

Oct. 25: Halloween Hustle, a 5-K at 10 a.m. and kids' 1-Miler at 9 a.m., beginning at the Bunch Fitness Center on Storck Barracks. Call DSN 467-2810 for information.

Oct. 31: Trunk-or-Treat from 5-8 p.m. at Hanger 2 in Katterbach and at the Dental Clinic parking lot on Stork Barracks. Call DSN 467-4703 for more

information on the event.

Oct. 31: Hallelujah Roundup from 5-7 p.m. at the Katterbach Chapel. Call CIV 09802957308 for information.

Oct. 31: Harvest Festival from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the Storck Chapel. Contact jenn2jody@yahoo.com or 01602979757 for information.

■ GARMISCH:

Oct. 30: Halloween Fair for Children from 5:30 - 7:30 in the Pete Burke

See HALLOWEEN Page 23

COURT MARTIAL



Charges referred against Morrisette in 2005 gang-beating death

JMTC news release

On Oct. 7, Brig. Gen. David R. Hogg, the commanding general of the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command, referred charges to general court-martial against Pvt. Bobby D. Morrisette of the 1st Cargo Transfer Company, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

Morrisette was charged with the following offenses related to the gang-beating death of Army

Sgt. Juwan Johnson, on or about July 3-4, 2005, in Kaiserslautern, Germany; involuntary manslaughter, conspiracy to commit aggravated assault, two specifications of participation in gang initiation rituals, two specifications of impeding an investigation, impeding a trial by court-martial, and two specifications of willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer.

The Article 32 pretrial hearing was conducted and completed at the Rose Barracks Courthouse in Vilseck, Germany, Aug. 4-5, 2008.

Morrisette is also accused of committing an indecent act on a girl in the presence of another person and wrongful use of a controlled substance, both stemming from separate incidents. This Article 32 pre-trial investigation happened in early September 2008, also at the Rose Barracks Courthouse.

The referral of charges and specifications to court-martial is merely an accusation against the accused Soldier. The accused Soldier is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

Q&A

Listed below are some of the most frequently asked questions about your new fuel card on-line account. For more FAQ, visit <http://www.imcom-europe.army.mil/sites/news/fuelcardFAQ.asp>

Q1: How do I log on to my fuel card account within the AAFES Web site?

A1: Please follow these procedures for logging into a Germany fuel ration card account:

■ The direct link to fuel ration card accounts is <https://odin.aafes.com/esso/>

■ Customers may log into their account by choosing "SSN" from the "pick list" for their ID, and entering their sponsor's 9 digit SSN (no dashes).

■ After entering their sponsor's ID, the customer's password is the license plate number from their vehicle (or any of the license plate numbers from their other vehicle if they have more than one vehicle registered).

■ Enter the license plate number exactly as it is shown on the back of the fuel ration card.

■ After logging on, customers who own more than one vehicle will see that their account shows them all of their registered vehicles.

Q2: What happens to my money when the monthly fuel ration resets at the beginning of each month?

A1: An absolute rule within this system is that the customer's money remains the customer's money until the customer uses their money to pay for fuel for their vehicle. Any unused money remains in the pre-paid account as the monthly ration renews at the beginning of each month.

Q3: Exactly when does the monthly ration renew?

A1: At the exact beginning of each month (slightly after midnight into the first day of the month) in the Central Europe time zone where Germany is located.



Visit the Web site to become familiar with the "who, what, where, when, why, and how" relating to the fuel ration card.

CMS to benefit Grafenwoehr

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Two issues ago I addressed the issue of how we can get better, to not accept status quo but rather seek new methods of continually improving our great community.

Fortunately for Grafenwoehr we will institute the Customer Management System, or CMS.

The Army's Installation

Management Command is providing us Mrs. Melynda Weaver who recently stood up the successful program at Fort Eustis.

CMS provides the garrison with customer feedback evaluation so we can align our limited resources to sustain those areas that are working well and improve those that you, the customer, require.

CMS will assist us in gathering, evaluating and solving issues emanating from the many



sources that include our town halls, senior spouses round table, community senior NCO call, chain of command communications, Retiree Council, ICE (Interactive Customer Evaluation) and surveys.

Key to CMS is the customer service assessment that we will conduct from Oct. 20 – Nov. 7.

This is a Web-based survey that examines the "A to Z" of what the garrison provides, and we need your help in completing this important instrument in order to define our focus areas for sustainment and improvement. Please go to <http://www.myarmyvoice.org/Community2008>.

To ensure CMS success, we will establish community teamwork through the formation of an installation action council that will consist of garrison leadership and constituents from the many councils and groups in our community.

Through Mrs. Weaver's efforts, we will use this council to formally close out issues and communicate to the community

how we are working your comments, as well as those areas that you believe are working

well. Once we get CMS off the ground at Grafenwoehr, we will examine how to migrate its benefits to USAGs Hohenfels and Garmisch.

Worth mentioning are three areas that are working extremely well:

■ Our NCO Academy's dining facility is now a top seven finalist in the worldwide Connelly competition for best in the Army;

■ Our ACS for their "Dumping Debt During Deployment" financial education program just received the Secretary of the Army's award for best practices;

■ and Our Child, Youth and School Services program passed the mandated DOD annual accreditation inspection with

superior results.

Hats off to these directorates and employees who have

We will use this council to formally close out issues and communicate how we are working your comments.

demonstrated their passion for our mission.

Good Enough Does Not Live Here - it is our mission that needs the teamwork of you, the people of our great community to ensure our

success. Be a part of the Mission-, Teamwork -, People -focus here at Grafenwoehr by completing the customer service assessment.

We look forward to CMS as we continuously improve our community together.

*Col. Chris Sorenson
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

CSM CORNER

Welcome home, 2SCR Dragoons!

Of all of the things that I will address in this week's column, first and foremost is the return of the brave men and women of the 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment.

I'd like to welcome them home and thank them for their courage and sacrifice, and ask that we never forget what they have done for our nation and the free world.

And for the Dragoons who did not return to us, I ask each of you to remember always the ultimate sacrifice that they and their families made. Never forget!

Lastly, I want to thank all of the directorates, agencies, commands, units, and individuals for their support as we reintegrate our 2SCR Soldiers. It is impossible to repay them for their sacrifices.

What we *can* offer, however, is to be prepared to support them and their families in every way possible as they try to return to the life, the homes, the families they left 15 months ago. It's a small offering in comparison, but it is one that we can, and will, give to show them that we care.

CFC 08

The garrison has just kicked off the world's largest annual workplace charity drive—the Combined Federal Campaign, which raises millions of dollars each year to assist thousands of charities through your donations.

Relatively small contributions from community members helps the CFC provide health and human service benefits throughout the world. I consider it a privilege to give, knowing that if I or a loved one were in need, my donations and those of my comrades would be there to sustain us.

If you would like to donate, contact your unit's CFC representative or call DSN 475-8432.

Winter's on the way

An upcoming issue of the Bavarian News will offer tips on winterizing your vehicles as cool autumn days give way to cold, icy conditions. But in keep in mind that weather here is unpredictable and can change for the worse with little or no warning.

If you have not begun preparing your

vehicle for winter weather, begin now to purchase or change over to winter tires and schedule the appropriate services before the cold season settles in.

Halloween

Halloween costumes have been purchased, and party planning is in full swing for many community members.

The garrison is hosting a number of fun Halloween and Harvest Fest activities for our families. (See Page 1 for a list of events).

I urge motorists to be especially careful as they drive in and around Netzaberg, Grafenwoehr, Vilseck and our surrounding communities.

Your sober vigilance can mean the difference between a typical fun-filled holiday and a day of tragedy for an unsuspecting family.

Pregnancy training

In keeping with taking care of *all* of our Soldiers, the Army's Pregnancy Postpartum Physical Training is a physical training program specifically for pregnant and postpartum Soldiers.

The Pregnancy portion of the program includes modified exercises and stretches to prevent harm to the Soldier and fetus.

The Postpartum portion of the program was designed to prepare the Soldier to pass the APFT 180 days after delivery.

Garrison Grafenwoehr's program also includes a six-month education component, providing Soldiers information on a wide variety of topics.

For more information on PPPT, contact Tracy Svalina, Health Promotion Coordinator, at DSN 475-8433.

ACAP

The Army Career and Alumni Program, better known as ACAP, hosts mandatory pre-separation briefings:

■ One-hour briefings are offered on Mon., Tues., Wed., and Fri. at 9 a.m., and at 1 p.m. on Thurs..

■ Soldiers can attend up to one year from their ETS date and two years from their retirement, but must complete the briefing when they are 90 days from separation.

Other ACAP programs include:

■ Transition Assistance Program workshop – provides an overview of job search process, resume writing, and interviewing

■ Advanced Civilian Resume Lab and Federal Resume Writing Labs – helps Soldiers write an effective resume for a specific job

■ Veterans Affairs and DTAP briefings – Representatives inform Soldiers of their VA benefits, including updated information

Spouses are also eligible for ACAP services. Deployed Soldiers can visit <https://www.acapexpress.army.mil> for tools to create resumes and cover letters.

Upcoming events will take place:

■ Oct. 14-16 (Vilseck) and Oct. 28-30 (Hohenfels): TAP Workshop: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

■ Oct. 21 (Vilseck) and 21 Oct. 21 (Graf Library): VA & DTAP Briefings: 8 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m.

■ Oct. 22 Advanced Resume Writing Lab: 9 a.m.-noon in Vilseck, Bldg. 273

■ Oct. 23: Federal Resume (Resumix) Writing Lab: 9 a.m.-noon in Vilseck, Bldg. 273.

Fall Clean Up

With the fall season approaching, it is time to improve the appearance of our community facilities, clean our areas of responsibility, and prepare for the upcoming winter.

USAG Grafenwoehr will conduct Fall Clean Up Nov. 3-7 in the Vilseck and Grafenwoehr military communities, as well as all off-post housing areas.

The intent is to use the scheduled time to improve the appearance of community facilities and our areas of responsibility through a coordinated effort by our supported units, employed host nation resources, contracted resources, and internal USAG Grafenwoehr assets.

The end state is a community-wide facelift, with collection and removal of trash and debris, resulting in an improvement in the quality of life for all our Soldiers, families, and civilians.

*Command Sgt. Maj. William Berrios
CSM, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

(Let us) never forget what they have done for our nation and the free world.

Bavarian News

Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Bamberg, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch

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bridging the

gap

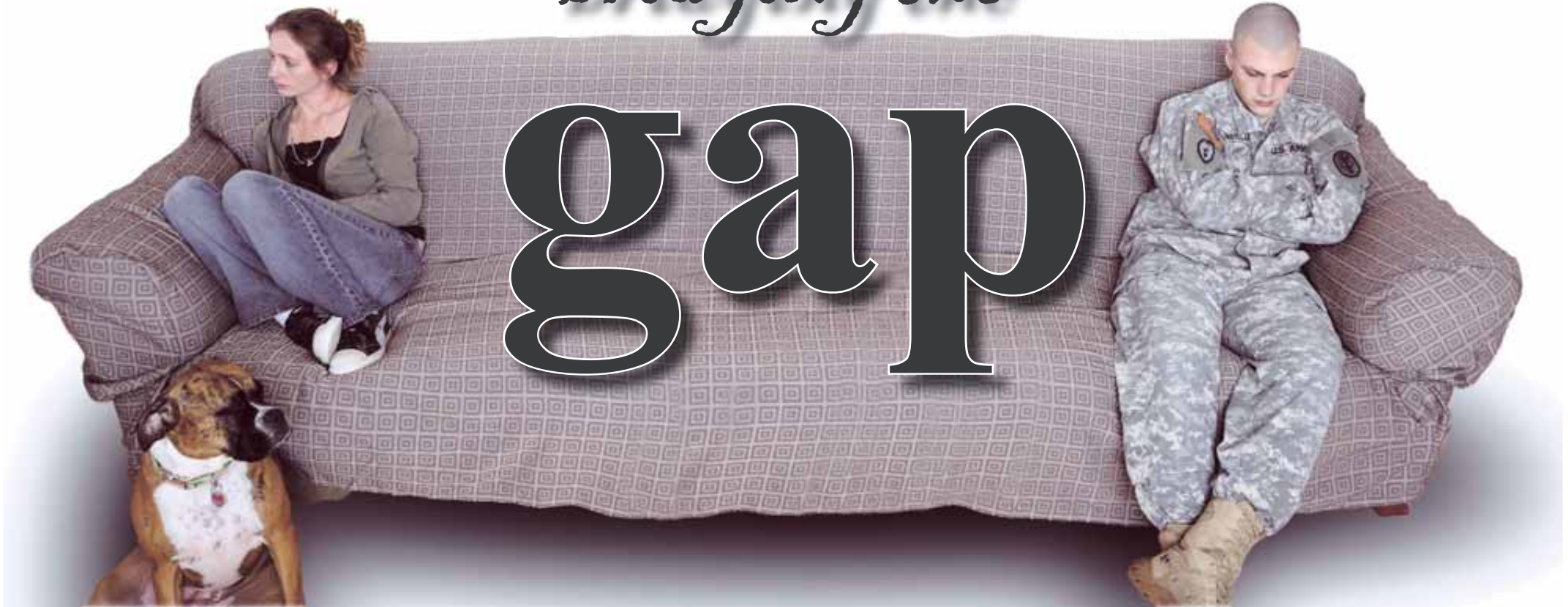


Photo illustration by Sgt. Stephen Morgan

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Couples urged to attack problem, not each other, during reintegration

by MARY MARKOS
Bavarian News

Note: This article is the second of a four-part series on helping military families cope with redeployment issues.

All Eva Creel wanted for 12 months was for her husband to come home from Afghanistan and be by her side. When he returned, she found she wanted nothing more than personal space.

Creel, like many spouses of redeployed Soldiers, discovered firsthand that the rush of emotions after redeployment can both draw a couple together, and pull them apart.

"When they're gone you miss them terribly, but you become very independent... I had my routine, my schedule, and my plans... he kind of got in the way of all those things," Creel explained.

Redeployment is an overwhelming joy and a rollercoaster ride of emotions, including everything from feelings of guilt from a newfound independence to the insecurity and frustration of getting to know one another again.

But these strange new emotions are 100 percent normal, according to U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr Deputy Chaplain (Lt. Col.) David Scheider.

The key to getting back on track, he said, is communicating expectations and emotions with one another.

Great Expectations

During extended separations, it is common for couples to develop unrealistic expectations of a physical and emotional reunion.

One of the most common types of expectation building is for Soldiers to develop an unrealistic image of their spouse in their minds. A very high number of deployed troops do this, he said.

"I had a few friends whose husbands were deployed at the same time as mine... We were like family, (talking every day)...., but when our husbands came back, we barely talked to each other."

Eva Creel
Spouse of deployed Soldier

"There is really not much of a place to get away from it all (while deployed)," explained Scheider, "so they develop a place in their brain to go to, in their memories. And they start to build this safe place... The star of that safe place in their mind is usually their wife (or husband).

"After awhile, they'll begin to develop this expectation of (the spouse) as this perfect person," he said. "It is totally unrealistic... it is half fantasy and half reality."

Back at home, said Creel, a spouse may experience the same thing.

"I did turn him into this perfect husband (during the deployment)," admitted Creel. "The reality is different."

To prevent reality shock from upending the marriage, the Soldier and spouse should reevaluate the "fantasy" image they have created of their loved one.

Everyone changes during deployments. As couples reunite Scheider said they must evaluate the reality—who they have become—and get to know each other again.

But don't take anything for granted. Communicate even the most obvious expectations and desires, even something as simple how much time you expect to spend alone together or who will take out the trash.

Many spouses look forward to handing over the job of disciplinarian and household organizer to the

redeploying Soldier. Often, however, recently returned service members simply can't make this decision because they are unsure of what the rules were in their absence, or what the rules should be.

And at the same time the spouse is ready to hand off the disciplinarian hat, the Soldier, having missed important family events (a child's birthday), is ready to make up for lost time by overindulging the child.

Talk, talk, and more talk is the key, said Scheider. Maintaining open communication—detailing large and minute expectations—is one of the only ways to weather the emotional storm of reintegrating.

Another sticking point is when an increasingly confident spouse, who has grown independent during the deployment, begins to resent when their Soldier expects them to put their life on hold during redeployment.

Returning Soldiers, however, may expect their spouses to pay little attention to their friends or hobbies, devoting all of their time to the Soldier.

While each couple will experience variations of these common scenarios, each relationship and every individual is unique. The bottom line and the driving factor for a smooth reintegration is to make reconnecting as a couple a top priority.

A rollercoaster ride

Soldiers may find themselves feeling both hurt and proud that their spouse coped so well without them. They may question whether or not they are needed in the relationship, and may even feel like an outsider in the family.

Spouses are encouraged to understand these feelings and attempt to make their Soldier feel needed.

Husbands and wives will need affirmation that the strength of their relationship is as strong as ever, or at least growing. The question couples most often ask one another during reintegration is, "Are you there for me; are we still connected emotionally?" said Scheider.

Connecting on an emotional level after redeployment may take some time.

Soldiers who experienced a high level of stress during the deployment may feel shame for something they did or guilt for something they did not do in combat.

This can be a contentious area, said Scheider.

"The most hurtful thing (to a spouse can be) wanting to have that significant reconnection, waiting for this time to really sit down and talk, and (the Soldier) stiff-arms her thinking, 'I want to protect her from who I am,'" explained Scheider.

He said while spouses may be curious about their Soldier's

experiences, the best thing they offer the service member is space to work through their feelings. He said spouses should avoid asking questions about what happened in combat and never pressure the Soldier for details.

If, however, the Soldier is still struggling with his feeling after six weeks, Scheider said the Soldier should seek help.

Throughout reintegration, as Soldiers readjust to their new home life, they may seek a comrade in arms to confide in and relate to. This may leave the spouse feeling unloved and alone.

"It calls into question the whole relationship... the loyalty and the bond," said Scheider. Soldiers, he added, should resist the urge to close their circle of support to only those they served with.

As did the Soldier, the spouse learned to rely on those around her or himself for support and assistance during the deployment.

When the Soldiers return, they may experience hurt feelings and disappointment if those support groups begin to crumble.

"I had a few friends whose husbands were deployed at the same time as mine... We were like family. We talked to each other every day. They were in my routine... but when our husbands came back, we barely talked to each other," Creel explained. "It is sad that you lose that friendship..."

It is important, however, said Scheider, for the marriage, not the friendships, to be the couple's main priority.

For couples who are still having trouble reconnecting on an emotional level after six weeks, Scheider suggested reaching out for professional help.

"Healthy couples," he said, "gang up on the problem, not each other."

For more tips and resources on redeployment, contact your local ACS, FRG, Chaplain's Office, or visit:

<http://www.armywell-being.org>

<http://fhf.osd.mil/deploymentTips.jsp> <http://fhf.osd.mil/deploymentTips.jsp>

<http://www.military.com/deployment>

IF YOU HAVE A TOPIC YOU'D LIKE US TO COVER IN THE NEXT REDEPLOYMENT ARTICLE, CALL 475-7113.



Spc. Thomas Alford, of B Troop, 1st Sqdn, 91st Cav, sites through his weapon during operations in Afghanistan. Alford was injured during a firefight and medically evacuated, only to return to duty, and war, to support both his unit and their counter-insurgency mission.

Courtesy photo

Checkmate: Cavalry commander details efforts to defeat insurgency

by MARK HEETER
Bavarian News

Note: Lt. Col. Christopher Kolenda, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry commander, offered an operations briefing from the unit's recently completed mission in Afghanistan, in his headquarters Sept. 17. This article is the second of a three-part series taken from the operations briefing.

Chess. A game played around the world, with a few different pieces that move left, right, backward, forward. On the surface, a simple enough concept.

And a game with an astronomical number of outcome possibilities.

"It's very simple game. But it's a very complex game," said Lt. Col. Christopher Kolenda, commander of the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, before describing the "multi-sided chess" that he and his Soldiers had to play every day of their 15-month deployment to Afghanistan.

"Every side plays by their own rules," Kolenda said, explaining the various motives and forces driving the moves of the local elders, police, the enemy, and the Americans. Each has subgroups with their own interests in this wartime game of "chess."

"And you also don't see the entire board," he said. "That's the kind of complexity that our folks are dealing with every single day. Absolutely amazing."

Kolenda and the Airborne Cav. realized there were two approaches to counterinsurgency, the first of which he called "enemy-centric."

"Your focus is, 'I'm going to kill or capture the enemy,'" and is effective if the enemy is an external force, easily identifiable and separable from the local population, he said.

"People don't want them there," he said. "You've already got the support of the people."

The second approach, "population-centric," was more dicey, in an environment where the fighters are locals, relatives and friends, and the population is either neutral or on the

insurgents' side, Kolenda said.

"An elder in the village might not like what his nephew or his son is doing, fighting and creating violence, but he also doesn't want to see him get killed or captured. And he is going to do everything he can to protect that guy," he said.

The absolutely critical piece of the formula and key to success, according to Kolenda: winning the population to the side of the governments, local and national.

A key tactic for the 1st Sqdn., 91st Cav. was to turn the population against the militants by re-strengthening local, traditional village and tribal leaders, providing jobs and development, aimed at giving them hope for the future.

"Throughout that process, you begin to marginalize and isolate these insurgent leaders, who begin defying the will of their own people," Kolenda said.

"You can't kill-capture and be effective until you've got the population on your side," he said.

Kolenda made sure his Soldiers understood who was responsible for improving security.

"Afghans solve Afghan problems. We cannot solve Afghan problems, nor should we try," he said, noting that Afghans, with their governing councils, or shuras, were all-too-willing to take the reigns of their problems.

"About once a year, most villages will elect their members of shura, and they will elect a chief of shura, and its proportional representation," he said, adding that they are most comfortable solving issues from within these councils.

"You transform the government, where people have so much ownership in the future, that they don't want to go back to the violence ... they will give you active and credible support to get rid of the people that perpetuate the violence."

Communication, through such tools as local radio, newspaper, handbills and flyers, was a key to the unit's strategy.

"More important was our deeds. How we acted with people on a daily basis was absolutely crucial," Kolenda said.

"Whenever we were in villages, it was sunglasses off, weapons pointed down and people interacting with the locals," from privates through lieutenant colonels.

"All these things that reduce friction, humanize us, in the minds of the people and create a connection where they say, 'these Americans are here to help and not tell us how to run our lives,'" Kolenda said.

By September 2007, about three months after hitting the ground in eastern Afghanistan, the 1st Sqdn, 91st Cav began to see the effects of their population-centric counterinsurgency.

"They really began to work closely with us, because they saw it was in their interest to do so," Kolenda said. "All the money is staying in the village economy, the elders have control over it, and they began to get

re-empowered and have the capability to provide economic capability to young men through jobs."

The militants mounted a "couple operations" in Kamdesh that failed badly and took the will to fight out of the enemy, Kolenda said.

"Their recruiting base shrunk to the point where they could not undertake, after the end of August, any large-scale operations," he said.

"You've got to punish the enemy and take the fun out of fighting. Whenever he reveals himself, you've got to hit him hard," Kolenda said.

The decrease in enemy contact allowed Kolenda and his Airborne Cav. to turn their attention back to working with Afghans to help them solve their problems.

"They didn't always like it, but it gave them ownership of the solutions," he said. "It worked extraordinarily well."

Next edition: The harvest of their efforts



Staff Sgt. Larry Underwood distributes school supplies to children in the squadron's area of operations. A key tactic for the 1st Sqdn., 91st Cav. in overcoming insurgency was to instill hope for the future with job creation, infrastructure construction, and school improvements.

Courtesy photo

Grafenwoehr cuts ribbon on new TMP gas station

by MARY MARKOS
Bavarian News

The rain poured Oct. 1 as U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr Commander Col. Chris Sorenson cut the ribbon, opening Graf's new Transportation Motor Pool gas station.

The wet weather, however, did not dampen the spirits of the community members that gathered to celebrate the end of the four month long renovation project.

Funded by Defense Energy Support Center, the renovation brought

oil resistant concrete to the fuel station and an oil and water separator between the gas station and sewage system to prevent the fuel from polluting the water table.

Other safety additions, such as an eye wash station and a quick release connector between the fuel hose and nozzle, were also installed.

John Skutt, garrison fuel manager, said that although the additions were not required, they were essential to ensuring the health and safety of TMP patrons.

The quick release connector, said

Skutt, will prevent the hose and pump from being dragged away if the hose is not disconnected from the vehicle when the driver drive.

"I have seen the after effects of this... you will have fuel leaking and possible a fire," he said.

The Grafenwoehr TMP fuel station now provides diesel fuel and unleaded gasoline 24 hours a day to accommodate the needs of the Inter-agency Fleet Management System (non tactical vehicle fleet), Army and Air Force Exchange Service, Morale Welfare and Recreation, and more

than 1,000 TMP vehicles using the FUELMaster key system.

JP8 for tactical vehicles and diesel fuel are available 24/7 at the Rose Barracks fuel station, Bldg. 621.

Around the clock accessibility, Skutt said, is not the only benefit of the new station.

"There is a cost saving to the government, as we have a contract with local fuel companies and we can purchase fuel in bulk cheaper than we can get it (with) coupons from Esso."

The TMP station is in Bldg. 305a.

Spotlight on Education



Name: Janet Nell

What grade and subject do you teach?
Sure Start

Hometown:
Elgin, Ill.

How long have you been a teacher?
Six wonderful years

What do you enjoy most about teaching?
Having the children and their parents fall in love with school.

What advice can you give students to help them succeed?
Teachers are here to help! Let them!!!

Annual CFC campaign kicks off Army-wide

by J.D. LEIPOLD
Army News Service

The Combined Federal Campaign, which kicked off Sept. 1 and runs through Dec. 15, is the world's largest annual workplace charity drive.

CFC raises millions of dollars each year to assist some 4,000 charities through donations from federal employees and service members that support eligible non-profit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world.

Most installations, like Grafenwoehr, have already launched their campaign for this year. Secretary of the Army Pete Geren officially opened the National Capital Area campaign Oct. 2 with an event at the Pentagon auditorium.

Clifford Lovejoy, the CFC manager for the Army's NCA campaign, said the goal in the area is to raise \$2.95 million and he has 34 campaign managers working with their commands to help raise the money.

"Now we have more than 4,000 charities within CFC and what I have found is that no matter who you are or where you are in life, if you have a situation where you need some help, there is no doubt in my mind that one of those 4,000 charities will be able to help you," Lovejoy said.

Federal employees and service-members may give to the charities of their choice via automatic payroll deduction or even a one-time cash or check gift.

To donate, contact your unit CFC rep or call DSN 475-8432.

Looking for results? New CMS program turning customer feedback into resolution

Special to the Bavarian News

Customers who live, work, or do business at U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr will have an opportunity to provide detailed feedback about all of the post's services.

The annual Customer Assessments are one of two new programs which fall under Customer Management Services. CMS is the Installation Management Command's new program for collecting feedback and using the data to evaluate and improve delivery of installation programs and services.

U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr's Customer Service Officer Melynda Weaver said she believes CMS will offer tangible results, addressing and correcting real-life issues that community members submit.

As a testament to the program's effectiveness, Weaver gave several examples of corrective actions taken after issues were submitted via the survey at Fort Eustis, Va.—a CMS test site.

She said one of the top areas of concern at Fort Eustis was mobilization and deployments. As a result of survey feedback, the command group increased funding to support its ACS mobilization specialist and created an additional position.

"Also, the issue was raised in a Soldier focus

group that Vehicle Registration hours of service were not conducive to Soldiers and family members who work full time," said Weaver. "In order to meet the needs of community members who cannot go to the installation Vehicle Registration office, the Installation Action Council voted to use PMO to assist customers in getting their DOD decals before and after the Vehicle Registration hours."

In another instance, community members noted during a retiree focus group that low-hanging branches obstructed view of the installation marquee, making it impossible to read from a moving vehicle. Weaver said DPW promptly re-landscaped the trees to fix the problem.

Issues may range from simpler, easy-fix items to more complex corrective actions that require additional time and funding. But Weaver said the garrison command is dedicated to CMS and looking forward to receiving customer feedback and fixing issues.

"This is a brilliant feedback service for Soldiers and their families across all installations," said Tony Patino, the IMCOM West Region CMS coordinator. "All customers will be able to rate how well the services they receive match their expectations. We can use this feedback to improve services, which will improve readiness and retention."

Most Army installations, including USAG Grafenwoehr, will see the multi-page, Web-based survey for the first time when it opens Oct. 21.

Grafenwoehr customers can fill out the survey beginning next week by visiting <http://www.myarmyvoice.org/Community2008>.

Other installations, like Fort Jackson, S.C. and Forts Richardson and Wainwright, Alaska, participated in the demonstration phase of the program in 2007, where more than 1,500 customers completed the survey.

The customers—Soldiers, family members, retirees, veterans, and civilian employees—provided information about the importance of programs and services, as well as a rating as to how well the installation is providing them.

The assessment is divided into two main categories, corporate and constituent, which are accessed from the same Web link that will be published within the next few weeks. When a customer begins the survey, they will be asked to provide demographic data that will automatically direct them to the appropriate corporate or constituent assessment.

In that way, Family members or retirees, for example, will not be asked to rate services like the Central Issue Facility or the Ammunition Supply Point — two services used by Soldiers

and their commanders.

Within the survey, customers will be asked to rate service performance on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent), and importance, also on a scale of 1 to 5. And any ratings of 1 or 2 must have an explanation describing any issues.

Data provided by unit commanders, command sergeants major, first sergeants, senior civilians and senior staff will be captured in the corporate portion. There they will rate the performance of the services and the importance of the service in relation to the accomplishment of their units' missions.

Check future issues of the Bavarian News, garrison community newsletter, and the Command Information Channel for updated information on CMS.

"The more customers in each category who take the 20 to 30 minutes to complete the survey, the more accurate and substantial the data collected," said Weaver. "This will provide a baseline for future annual assessments."

The data will be returned to the installation in November, where it will be used to identify and document best practices in areas and develop plans for improvement in others.

For more information about the October Customer Service Assessments, call Melynda Weaver at DSN 475-8881.

Grafenwoehr wins Quality of Life award for Best Practices

IMCOM Public Affairs

Quality of Life Awards were presented during the "Strengthening Soldiers and Families Through Community Partnership" Family Forum Oct. 7 at the 2008 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

The awards recognize best practices adopted in support of the Soldier Family Action Plan, the Army Family Covenant and the Army Community Covenant.

The awards acknowledge the innovations and best practices achieved from garrisons and units over the past year, and reflect the senior Army leadership's commitment to providing Soldiers and their Families a quality of life commensurate with the quality

of their service to the nation.

"The Community Covenant shows there is no substitute for neighbors helping neighbors ... part of the Covenant is taking best practices and spreading them to other installations and showing the community they can help at all levels," Secretary of the Army Pete Geren said.

"We are embracing the community, thanking them, and pulling them in the gate to show how their generosity matches the specific needs of the local installation," said Geren.

Following the awards ceremony, Geren presented a surprise award to retired rmy Maj. Gen. Craig Whelden, for his leadership that ensured the success of the Army Community Covenant program across the country. Whelden received a Department

of the Army Meritorious Civilian Service Award for meritorious performance of duty while serving as the director, Army Community Covenant

Task Force, Office of Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, from March 2008 to October 2008.

The Quality of Life Award winners are:

Superior Quality of Life Award (large installation):

U.S. Army Garrison, Wiesbaden, Germany - Through the warrior programs, Adopt-a-Room, Adopt-a-Soldier, Eagle Card, and Employment Connection programs, the garrison obtained "no cost to the government"

See GRAFENWOEHR Page 23



IMCOM-E Director Diane Devens accepts the award on behalf of U.S. Army Garrison, Grafenwoehr, Germany, Oct. 7 at the 2008 AUSA annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

Photo by Stephen Oertwig

RETIREE CORNER

Garrison health clinic commanders meet with Retiree Council

by DAVE STEWART

Graf Retiree Council president

Col. Alfonso Alarcon, Vilseck Health Clinic commander, and Lt. Col. Telita Crosland, Grafenwoehr Health Clinic commander, addressed the Garrison Retiree Council at the quarterly meeting on Sept. 3.

Representative, Ms. Renate Dix, Vilseck TRICARE representative, was also in attendance and responded to concerns and issues retirees now face with the reduction of outpatient services.

Alarcon discussed the priority of services, citing the expansion of the active duty and family member population as the reason behind the decision.

"We regret having to take this step, however, our staffs are stretched beyond our current capability," said Crosland. "Our physicians want to treat this older population because we see conditions and illnesses that aren't prevalent in the active duty force, and treating patients in the retiree population sharpens our skills, but regrettably, we don't have the staff."

Both commanders are working TRICARE to ensure retirees receive the medical support they need with providers on the economy, as it is no longer possible to be seen at the clinics, even on a space-available basis.

"Patients need to establish a relationship with a TRICARE approved physician on the economy. It is the most consistent

form of care, TRICARE providers can write prescriptions that will be honored by our pharmacies," said Alarcon, "and we have taken steps to instruct approved physicians how to complete a prescription."

Dix added that patients can have their prescriptions filled at a local pharmacy and file a claim with TRICARE; however there are still deductible fees that the patient must assume.

Please stop by the health clinic pharmacy for directions on how German providers should fill out a prescription in the American format.

Dix said "both health clinics maintain a list of physicians on the economy where retirees and eligible family members can be seen, this is known as the Preferred Provider Network, or PPN."

Dix also added that this list is always expanding and encouraged patients to frequently check with TRICARE for updates.

Council Vice President, Air Force Lt.Col. Doug Kramer asked if the clinics will see retirees during dips in the active duty/family member population or an increase in the medical staffs. Both health clinic commanders said it was premature to comment, however, both encouraged retirees to establish a relationship with a physician on the economy as it would be disruptive to change physicians for a specific chronic condition.

Another council member asked if retirees can still receive flu, pneumonia and shingles vaccines. The health clinic commanders said that the active duty population and family members would be a priority for the annual flu vaccination, but they expected no shortages

this year and retirees would still be able to receive it. The pneumonia and shingle vaccines are targeted for the senior population and they expected no difficulties in continuing this service for the retirees and their eligible family members.

The Berlin Sub-Council President, Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) J.C. Moss, queried on whether there was a PPN list for his area. Dix stated that the approved physicians were located within the Bavaria medical activity had a list, however, Berlin was far outside the boundaries of U.S. Army medical service areas.

Since the meeting, Moss reports that the Defense Attaché TRICARE office has a list for the Berlin area.

Another Retiree Council Member, Chief Warrant Officer 3 (Ret.) Larry Simank, was concerned with having only specialties, such as Surgery, Dermatology, OB/GYN, Cardiovascular, ENT on the Preferred Provider Network. Simank stated that "retirees with various medical problems requiring medications must visit and pay several PPN physicians to get their renewal prescriptions."

"This is time and dollar consuming for the retirees," added Simank.

Simank suggested having several General Practitioners on the PPN who have the authorization to write renewal prescriptions for all the medications their patients require.

Crosland stated that there are several primary care physicians in the network, and each health clinic can help facilitate retirees establishing care with those providers. In addition, the health clinics are looking to increase

the radius of the primary care physicians based on the density of where retirees are located.

The council members pointed out that many retirees do not realize that they will not be eligible for TRICARE if they do not enroll in MEDICARE Part B at age 65. TRICARE eligibility after age 65 is linked to Medicare Part B enrollment - this applies worldwide.

Retired U.S. service members and their families living overseas are covered by TRICARE Standard until they turn 65 or otherwise become eligible for Medicare Part B. Once retirees become eligible for Part B, they must enroll to be eligible for TRICARE for Life, which offers the same coverage as TRICARE Standard.

There are no premiums or enrollment fees for TRICARE Standard or TRICARE for Life. However, to be eligible for TRICARE for Life, you must enroll in Medicare Part B and pay the monthly Part B premium.

The bottom line is that retirees are being asked to seek care with providers on the economy, and then file claims with TRICARE, who maintains a list of preferred providers and prescriptions can be filled at each health clinic's pharmacy if the German provider creates it in the proper American format and the medication is available via the formulary.

For more information, contact your local U.S. Army Health Clinic, clinic pharmacy, or TRICARE representative.

Salsa dance spices up heritage event



Norma Barrientos, originally from Peru and now a resident of Garmisch, learns Salsa dance moves from Freddy Osorio.

Story and photo by JOHN REESE
Garmisch PAO

The National Hispanic Heritage Month celebration Oct. 2 at the Pete Burke Community Center came with the usual guest speaker, presidential proclamation, and a new twist—"salsa" dance lessons taught by the garrison's new Equal Employment Opportunity officer.

The guest speaker for the event was Alma Molina, the EEO chief for USAG Hohenfels.

"Her speech reminded us about the beauty of our diversity and the importance of getting involved with our families, our community our nation," said Freddy Osorio, EEO officer for USAG Garmisch and the day's dance instructor.

Molina, who was born in Guayaquil, Ecuador, and served in the Army as a Soldier from 1980-1983, and as a Department of the Army civilian for 22 years. She has been with the EEO program since 2000.

The lunchtime event featured catered and homemade Hispanic foods.

Ethnic observances like this are always popular with the joint service military personnel in Garmisch, and the Hispanic Heritage celebration drew a large number of American and German service members in duty uniforms.

Two Soldiers on leave from Iraq looking for the post library instead found themselves joining the community for lunch.

Throughout the program, Spanish music and a slide show of notable Hispanic figures from American history were continuously played.

Salsa dance lessons helping to burn off the calories from lunch concluded the observance.

"The event was a huge success," said Osorio. "Most notable was seeing the tenant commands (Marshall Center, NATO School) represented. I estimate we had close to 150 people in attendance."

Student artists from the Garmisch American School created hand-painted decorations representing the flags of Spanish-speaking nations.

This was the first major ethnic ob-

servance managed by Osorio since he joined the garrison team in late July.

The event was strongly supported by Shelley Stokes, Jessica Roberson, and Andrea Winter. More volunteers helped with the decorations and food from Latin America and the Philippines.

The term Hispanic refers to Spanish-speaking people in the United States of any race. More than 35 million people identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino in the 2000 U.S. census.

The U.S. celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month annually beginning Sept. 15, the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

In addition, Mexico declared its independence on Sept. 16 and Chile on Sept. 18.

The tradition began in the United States as a weeklong celebration in 1968 during President Lyndon Johnson's administration, and was expanded to a month in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan.

Special effects add realism to Fire Week

Story and photo by JOHN REESE
Garmisch PAO

The fire alarm was tripped, and the students and teachers flooded into the main corridor of Garmisch American School, automatically headed for the exit they always used in an emergency.

Only this time the front doors of the school were thick with smoke, blocking the usual route.

Less than a hundred yards away, fire extinguishers were being deployed in an attempt to knock down a raging fire that stubbornly refused to go out, while an auto accident between a heavy truck and a passenger car in the commissary parking lot would require the Jaws of Life to extricate the victims.

Those realistic scenarios made Fire Prevention Week on Artillery Kaserne in Garmisch a rather exciting one.

"Fire Safety is a part of the Occupational Safety & Health Program, or Workplace Safety, and requires personnel to attend fire training," said Safety Officer Andreas Tuerk.

Fire Prevention Week takes place annually to commemorate one of the worst disasters in America during the 19th century—the Great Chicago Fire of October 8-9, 1871.

The Garmisch Safety Office combines fire safety awareness with mandatory occupational safety training required twice annually.

Instead of the just the usual safety lectures, videos and a repeat of last year's demonstration by the Garmisch Volunteer Fire Department of removing accident victims from a staged

auto wreck, the USAG Garmisch team of 'Safety Man' Tuerk and Fire Chief Wolfgang Pauls-Polch decided to enhance the training by using a bit of Hollywood special effects.

Some of the awareness training, such as distributing fire prevention flyers in the Breitenau Housing Area or the mandatory safety classes taught by Tuerk and Pauls-Polch was done in throughout the week to small groups of German and American employees.

"During Fire Prevention Week the U.S. and local national staff members had the possibility to attend fire training and to feel the heat during fire extinguisher training using the life fire trainer," said Tuerk.

The simulator consists of a mocked up room with controlled gas jets, sort of like a giant stove the size of a living room.

One side of the fire trainer is clear, allowing spectators to safely watch as firefighters and coworkers practice the right way to put out a fire using an extinguisher.

The portable trainer is built on a trailer, and was a very popular display at the 140th anniversary of the Garmisch Fire Department in the pedestrian zone of Garmisch July 20.

"All of the people were surprised to experience a real fire trainer," said Pauls-Polch. "They were able to experience the feeling of fighting a fire."

The fire drill at the school was a curve ball thrown at the students and teachers. With only Principal Debbie Strong in the know, Pauls-Polch placed a smoke generator in between the outer and inner doors of the



Chief Wolfgang Pauls-Polch, shrouded in steam simulating a fire, crouches in the entrance of Garmisch American School as Andreas Tuerk joins him with a box of fire safety goodies for students.

school's main entrance.

After he sounded the alarm, the student body automatically followed the same route they'd always followed, only to find the escape route thick with non-toxic steam that looked just like a real fire.

The simulated smoke was leaking into the main corridor, curling up to the ceiling to cast a pall over the kids.

For a second the wide-eyed chil-

dren and teachers halted, and then from the back one of the teachers called out: "This way is blocked. We have to go another way!"

The line reversed course, exiting out of the back door and moving to their assembly areas a safe distance from the school.

Moments after all souls were accounted for, a truck from the Garmisch Fire Department arrived on scene Code Three.

The students cheered and the drill was over.

With the serious business complete, the kindergartners and first graders were treated to rides in the fire truck.

Safetyman and the Chief aired out the steam and invited the kids to pick out stickers, toy fire helmets, posters, and fire safety certificates.

"This is a good deal!" said a kindergarten.

In my own words: How I spent my summer vacation

by **CHELSEA MICHTA**
Senior, Munich International School

Pencils poised and heads held high, nine elementary students participated in "Write On", a creative writing program held at the Garmisch American School over the summer.

I initially created the program for students in grades 4-7 during the summer of 2007, and gradually developed it during my junior year, working through the channels at the Garmisch American School.

After months of preparation and planning, "Write On" was launched, much to the delight of the nine participating students and their teacher.

The students met at the school from 9 a.m. – noon from Aug. 11-15, exploring poetry, short-story writing, Haikus, and fables.

They worked individually and in groups, focusing chiefly on illustrating their work with vivid images and sensory details. From hopscotch to hide-and-seek, the class incorporated a myriad of hands-on activities to stimulate their creative juices.

I wanted to give students the opportunity to go beyond what they'd done in the classroom and explore different areas of writing that perhaps they'd yet to encounter.

I think it's important for middle-schoolers, who have spent time in lower grades honing basic skills, to diversify their writing and to develop a more personal means of expression.

I think it's important for kids to discover that our emotions and senses fuel our writing, especially our ability to do so creatively.

Garmisch Principal Debbie

Strong was very supportive of the program.

She said I exhibited a poised and patient demeanor with my young writers while encouraging them to go beyond their perceived ability and produce writing that was rich with vivid verbs, adjectives, and voice.

When I presented her with the idea in early August, she expressed a keen interest in developing the program.

She later attended sessions in the classroom as well as interacting with some of the students.

She said over the course of the weeklong workshop, she observed the students experimenting with vibrant imagery in prose and poetry pieces. Strong called it a very profitable week that gave the students a "jump start of success to begin the new school year!"



Madeleine Roberts, a fourth grader at Garmisch American School, contemplates her next line of prose while participating in Write On, a creative writing program, with eight other students.

Courtesy photo

McGee remembered as selfless friend, boss

by **KRISTIN BRADLEY**
Bavarian News

James D. McGee was an honored infantryman and a valued professional who has served the Hohenfels community since 1994, holding the position of U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels security manager since 2003.

During a funeral service honoring McGee on Oct. 7 in Schlicht, Germany, Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Gary Bloomberg said McGee “during his 60 years on this earth lived his life more intensely than most will in 10 lifetimes, and will be remembered far longer.”

McGee, born in 1948, entered the United States Army in 1966 from Nashville, Tenn., and



McGee

served as an infantry Soldier. He retired as a first sergeant after 20 years and 11 months.

Based on his bravery under fire, McGee was awarded the Combat Infantryman’s Badge, the Bronze Star, and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm.

Following his distinguished career in the Army, he served for 21 years as a Department of the Army civilian, during which time he earned three performance awards and one special act award.

He began his civilian career in Nuremberg, Germany, as a training technician and was promoted to Conventional Forces in Europe coordinator for the 99th Area Support Group in Fuerth, Germany.

He moved to Hohenfels as a security specialist in 1994 working for the Seventh Army Training Command and then the 282nd Base Support Battalion before being appointed garrison security manager.

Known by his friends as “Mac,” his colleagues

in the garrison S2 office describe him as a quiet, fair man who was passionate about helping Soldiers and anyone else he came into contact with.

“He was always giving of himself, not because he expected anything in return but because he wanted to help you,” said Teresa Saucedo, garrison security specialist. “I couldn’t have asked for a better boss.”

“In my 20-plus years in the military and working for the government, I have had a lot of supervisors, but Mr. McGee was the best of them all,” said Vincent Brown, garrison security specialist. “He supported you. No matter what issue you had, personal or professional, he would find a way to help you over that bridge.”

“He had vision. He was always looking to do things a better way,” said Saucedo as his colleagues described how he worked tirelessly to streamline processes within the garrison, even helping people and agencies completely unrelated to his job description.

McGee passed away on Oct. 3. He was preceded in death by his children: Mary Anne, Jo Anne, and Marie; his father, William; his brothers, Tim and Edgar; and his grandparents, Willie and Viola Markus.

He is survived by his daughters Rebecca and Angie; his granddaughter, Sandra; his mother, Mabel; his brother, Jim; and his sister, Pam.

He was always giving of himself, not because he expected anything in return, but he wanted to help you.

Teresa Saucedo
Garrison security specialist

Do you know the tax relief rules?

by **RAPHAEL WUNSCH**
IMCOM-E MWR Business Branch

Americans living in Europe certainly know that taxes here are higher than those stateside.

But there is a tax-relief program authorized by the German Federal Ministry of Finance that permits the U.S. Armed Forces in Germany to make tax-free purchases for many items on the economy without paying the 19 percent value-added tax.

VAT offices are available at every Installation Management Command-Europe garrison and some U.S. Air Forces in Europe bases, with oversight and program management provided by IMCOM-Europe’s Morale, Welfare and Recreation division.

But before you rush out and buy that piece of handcrafted furniture you’ve always wanted, you need to read customer handouts found at every VAT office – or on the Web at https://public.euromwr.army.mil/mwr_tax.htm – to become familiar with VAT form rules.

Not following proper procedures or making unauthorized VAT free purchases will result in suspension of VAT privileges – and possible tax violation charges by German authorities.

Dagmar Knott, accounting technician with the U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels VAT office, said the biggest mistakes customers from Hohenfels often make are following improper procedures, such as using the “regular” VAT forms for purchases of 2,500 Euros or more or using VAT forms for utilities, telephone service (landline and cellular), home renovations or and adding permanent structures to real estate.

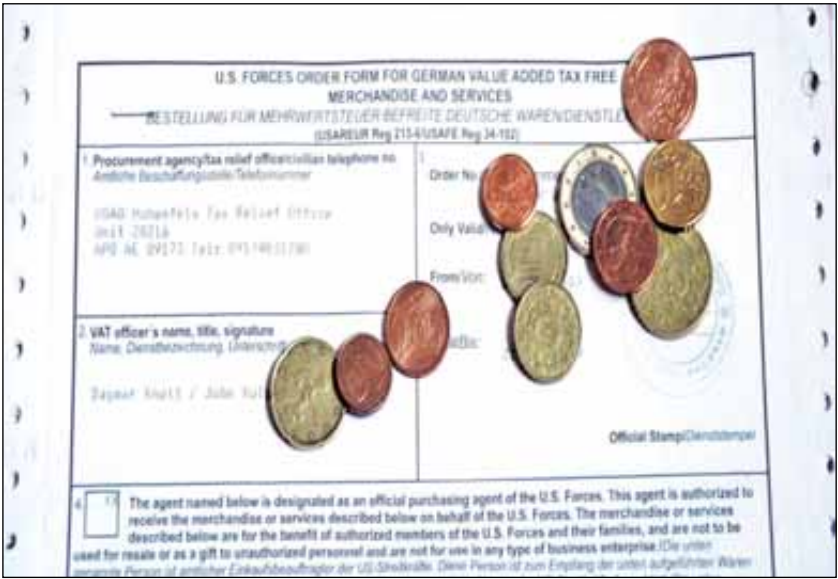
Mistakes also occur when customers try to use a form that is not their own, split the purchase across multiple forms, or sign a bill of sale or place an order and then provide the VAT form at a later time (when paying or picking up).

Following improper procedures or making an unauthorized purchase are host nation violations. And while vendors might believe they are allowed to accept VAT forms for particular items, they, unfortunately, are not totally familiar with every restriction.

Even if a vendor says the use of a VAT form is okay, you could be making an unauthorized purchase.

As a result you as the customer will face a tax bill for any unpaid taxes and potential German tax violation charges.

Plus there could be actions taken against you by military authorities



–including suspension of VAT privileges. Therefore, ensure that your tax-free purchase is authorized and that proper procedures are followed. Do not rely on information provided solely by vendors.

The German Ministry of Finance does not tolerate abuse of the VAT system and related procedures. It requires VAT offices to monitor tax-free purchases for violations. Furthermore, any violation or suspected violation will be reported to the U.S. military police customs office.

VAT forms are important tax documents and should be treated as such. It is highly recommended that people check with a VAT office prior to making major purchases. Additionally, customers should always keep a pink copy of every VAT form.

Who can use VAT forms?

U.S. service members, government civilian employees and immediate family members stationed in or on temporary duty to Europe or North Africa. Most contractors are not eligible as they are not government employees. The name of the person making the purchase must appear on the form. For verification purposes, vendors are authorized to ask for identification cards.

Where can VAT forms be used?

At any retailer or wholesaler who reports his income to German fiscal authorities.

What can VAT forms be used for?

Generally any product or service obtained from a vendor, such as clothing, electronics, vehicles, vehicle repair/maintenance, firearms, groceries, attorney fees, regular move-in/move-out expenses (wallpapering, painting, carpeting), and auction purchases of up to 2499.99 euros.

What are tax forms NOT used for?

- *Telecommunication services – landline and cellular phones; Internet access.
- *Kitchens costing more than 15,000 euros without taxes added.
- *Business purposes like buying supplies to run a small business or renovating an apartment rental.
- *Rentals such as apartments, houses, stables and garages if a long-term (six months or more) lease is executed.
- *Any expenses related to the purchase or sale of real estate (realtor, notary, court, attorney fees). Tax relief is authorized for realtor fees when renting real estate but not when purchasing.
- *Expenses related to home construction and real-estate renovations that are not considered to be minor repairs: water damage, mold removal, bathroom remodeling (tiles, tubs), water or electrical line replacement.
- *Adding permanent structures to real estate, including winter gardens, garages, car ports, barns, tool sheds, built-in Jacuzzis, and built-in fireplaces or ovens.
- *Replacing or purchasing roofs, windows, doors, heating systems, shutters, solar energy systems, walkways, stairwells/cases, oil tanks and hardwood floors.

While the VAT form is a great money saver – Germany permits U.S. DoD members to use it for items such as groceries, cars, motorcycles, vehicle repairs, clothing, electronics, hotels, and rental cars – restrictions must be observed.

If you are uncertain about a purchase, check with your local VAT office.

Photo by Kristin Bradley

- *Expensive works of art or other collectibles, such as gold coins or stamps.
 - *Auction purchases of 2,500 Euros or more.
 - *Utilities such as electricity, water and natural gas.
- However, heating oil or propane gas deliveries are authorized. There is a separate program available in many VAT offices for utility tax relief.
- At USAG Hohenfels, certain companies will accept VAT form for electricity, said Knott. E.ON around Hohenfels, Stadtwerke in Hemau, and Dalta Ingeneur in Velburg all accept the forms.
- Knott said for customers of these companies to take advantage of tax relief, they need to first come to the tax relief office inside of the Community Activities Center and fill out a form which is forwarded to Grafenwoehr, and then on to the company.
- Customers also need to come to see Knott first if they want to make a purchase of more than 2,500 Euros. For large purchases, a different procedure and form is used.

Are vendors required to accept VAT forms?

No. If a business owner simply does not want to take the time to complete the paperwork, the customer will have to pay the tax or find a business that is willing to accept the form.

When ordering an item or service, when must I provide the vendor with a VAT form?

You must provide a vendor with the VAT form at the time you order an item or service – not when picking it

up or paying for it. The reason is that the first document of the VAT form package is the official order form for the tax-free item/service.

The vendor told me it is okay to use a VAT form for a purchase, so it must be okay—right?

Wrong. Vendors are not always familiar with every tax-relief rule and restriction. The purchaser is always responsible for all taxes, unless a legal exception exists, such as a VAT form for an approved purchase.

If an unauthorized tax-free purchase is made, even if the vendor said it was okay, using a VAT form for unapproved purchases – such as having a roof on a house replaced – the customer is required to pay the taxes.

If the vendor has accepted a VAT form and no taxes were paid, a “surprise tax bill” will follow as the customer will be forced to pay later (which can be years), along with additional fees and possible fines. Plus the VAT office will be required to take appropriate actions – including suspension of VAT privileges.

What happens if I knowingly or unknowingly break the rules for tax relief?

VAT offices are required to report violations or suspected violations to the Military Police customs office.

Breaking the rules could result in suspension of VAT privileges for a year or more (depending on the severity of the case), administrative actions by the U.S. military and tax violation charges by German authorities, who do not recognize people claiming to be unaware of tax rules as a valid excuse.

The German government allows the U.S. Department of Defense to extend tax-free purchases to its servicemembers and civilian employees.

But it is important to note, legally speaking, that it is the U.S. armed forces making tax-free purchases, not an individual.

While the VAT form is a great money saver – Germany permits U.S. DoD members to use it for items such as groceries, cars, motorcycles, vehicle repairs, clothing, electronics, hotels, and rental cars – restrictions must be observed. If you are uncertain about a purchase, check with the Hohenfels VAT office at 466-1780 or the IMCOM-Europe program management at 370-3727.

Know what’s going on in your area for Halloween?

Be sure to read the Page 1 Halloween article and list of activities.



1st Lt. Robbie Murray, a platoon leader for Hohenfels' Company C, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment greets Afghan school children during his first visit to local villages in the Day Chopan district. Building a fully operating school is a primary goal for Murray's platoon.
Photo by Spc. Alex Godinez

The view from downrange



Photo by Spc. Alex Godinez

(Above) Hohenfels Soldiers from Team Cherokee fire a mortar during indirect fire training at Firebase Baylough in July, shortly after their arrival in Afghanistan.

(Right) Local villagers help Soldiers get their vehicle unstuck when the road gave way under the ASV driven by Soldiers from Hohenfels' 1st platoon, 527 MP Co. during a mission to train Afghan National Police.

(Far right) Spc. Jose Cortez, a driver from Hohenfels' 1st squad, 1st platoon, 527th MP Co., changes a tire in three minutes using a power impact wrench after it was slashed while traveling the brutal Afghan roads.



Photo by Pfc. Rachel Rubrecht

1st Lt. Doug Bryant, platoon leader of Hohenfels' 1st platoon, 527th Military Police Company, checks the security around the Provincial Governors Compound during a meeting in Mehtar Lam, Afghanistan. Mehtar Lam is the Provincial Capital for Laghman Province.



Photo by Doug Bryant



Photo by 1st Lt. Doug Bryant



Photo by 1st Lt. Doug Bryant

Hohenfels Soldiers from 1st Squad, 1st platoon, 527th MP Co., Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, Afghanistan conduct a security halt to link up with 2nd Squad, 1st platoon Soldiers from Forward Operating Base Kalagush who are traveling in the same area.

What's Happening

Grafenwoehr/Vilseck Briefs

CFC Campaign Kick Off

The Combined Federal Campaign Overseas kick off ceremony will take place today from 9 a.m.-10 a.m. in Grafenwoehr at Bldg 244. There will be cake and great door prizes. For more info contact Ms. Nunez at DSN 475-8432, CIV 09641-83-8432.

Health clinic services

Due to the medical needs of the returning Stryker Soldiers, the Vilseck Health Clinic will have reduced services during October and November. We will continue to provide some well-baby and well-woman appointments, but the majority of our appointment openings will be for same day, acute issues.

We will continue to utilize our German providers to ensure good access for our patients. We apologize for the inconvenience this may cause, but we're very excited to be part of the welcome home for our returning Strykers!

Sport registration

Registration begins today and runs through Dec. 19 for all winter sports age groups! The winter sports age cutoff is March 15. Kids can participate in basketball, cheerleading, or wrestling.

If you have any questions, call Dan Fraizer, Director Youth Sports & Fitness, at DSN 476-4037. To register, please call CYS Service Central Registration at DSN 475-6655 or DSN 476-2760.

Mental Health Self-Assessment Program

Vilseck Commissary and the Department of Defense are promoting the DoD-funded Mental Health Self-Assessment Program throughout the month of October. Through this initiative, free eco-friendly grocery bags and refrigerator magnets with a health promotion message will be distributed to commissary customers at local outreach events.

Ski club kick-off

The Bavarian Ski Club will host their annual season kick-off party today at Santa Lucia II Italian Restaurant in Grafenwoehr at 6 p.m. Anyone who is interested in skiing or snowboarding with the club during the 2008-2009 Season is encouraged to attend! Free food will be provided by the club! Please R.S.V.P. with Renate Neaverth at 475-6330 or email renate.neaverth@us.army.mil, if you plan to attend.

Employment opportunities

Contract positions open now for our Grafenwoehr/Vilseck/Hohenfels chapel programs and congregations. We have immediate openings for religious education coordinators, musicians, and music directors for this next fiscal year.

To view the details of the contract and work statement please go online to www.usace.army.mil/graf/vend/vend.htm. If this is the first time that you have applied for a contract, please go to www.ccr.gov in order to register in the CCR. You must accomplish this before you can bid on the contracts.

For questions please contact, CH (Lt. Col.) David Scheider, Deputy Garrison Chaplain or your Chapel/Congregational Pastor.

Charity concert

A charity concert will be held Friday at St. Ägidius Church in Vilseck at 5.30

p.m. The event is organized by the charity organization "Vilseck gibt Hoffnung" ("Vilseck gives Hope"). Actors Beate Griesbeck (Soprano), Franz Lahm (Trumpet), Maximilian Betz (Organ) will perform classical music from Franz Schubert, Johann Sebastian Bach, Georg Friedrich Händel, and Franz Schmidt.

"Vilseck gibt Hoffnung" financially supports projects for people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS in Africa and Asia. www.vilseck-gibt-hoffnung.de

Wine festival

A wine fest will be held at the Castle Dagestein in Vilseck Friday at 3 p.m. Musical entertainment by the local band Auerbacher Spitzbuam.

Great wines, coffee, cakes and local food specialties. Entry is free!

One act plays

Grafenwoehr Festival of One Act Plays will be held Oct. 19. at the Vilseck High School Mult-Purpose room starting at 7 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, please call Joline Powell at DSN 475-6426 or CIV 09641-83-6426 or e-mail her at Joline.powell@eur.army.mil.

Bulk trash pick-up

The City of Grafenwoehr and the villages Gmuend and Huetten will have an off post bulk trash pick-up Monday. Items that will be picked up include: furniture, mattresses, carpets, washing machines, dryers, radios, TVs, ovens, stoves, bicycles, strollers, etc., and other items which cannot be dismantled, torn or broken down to a size that would fit in the regular refuse container.

Each single item should not be larger than 80x40x32 inches and should not be heavier than 110 lbs.

Bulk trash consisting of metal (i.e. bicycles, washers, dryers, stoves, etc.) and electronic equipment (such as large appliances, small appliances, cooling devices, information & telecommunications including entertainment equipment) should be put out separately next to the normal bulk trash.

Items should be left curbside for collection. Contact USAG Grafenwoehr O & M Division, Utilities Branch Grafenwoehr, at DSN 475-6664, CIV 09641-83-6664.

Musical auditions

Auditions will be held for Susical the Musical at the Vilseck High School multi-purpose room Oct. 7 and Oct. 9 at 6 p.m. If you are interested in getting on the stage, come out and join the fun. Prepare a musical selection in style of the show to audition with. No live accompaniment will be available. Readings will be provided. We are looking for performers 9 and up as well as production crews. For more information, please call Joline Powell at DSN 475-6426 or CIV 09641-83-6426 or e-mail Joline.powell@eur.army.mil.

Breast cancer awareness walk

A 5 kilometer breast cancer awareness walk will be held at Little Mike Lake in Vilseck Oct. 11 at 9:30 a.m.

Employment opportunities

The Vilseck and Grafenwoehr Education Centers are currently hiring for substitute personnel in the following job positions: Counselor Aide, Test Examiner, Admin Support Assistant, ALC Operator, Facilities Administrator, German Headstart Instructor, and FAST Instructor.

For information or to apply, call Dave Baker, CTC Program Manager, Vilseck

Education Center, DSN: 476-2457, CIV: 09662-83-2457, or e-mail: bill.baker1@us.army.mil.

Tower Theatre renovation

The Grafenwoehr Tower Theater is closed for renovations. The theater is expected to reopen in early 2009.

Absentee voters week

Absentee Voters Week from Oct. 12-18. Absentee Voting Info will be available from Oct. 15 from 2 – 5 p.m. at the CMR in Grafenwoehr, and Oct. 16 at the CMR in Vilseck

Job assistance training

The Army Career and Alumni Program offers the DOL Transition Assistance Program Workshop once a month. Topics such as goal setting, resume and cover letter writing, job search techniques, interview techniques, salary negotiation skills and more are covered. The next TAP Workshops in Vilseck are scheduled for Oct. 14-16 and Nov 18-20.

Vet vaccination clinic

The Vilseck Veterinary Treatment Facility will host a weekend vaccination clinic Oct. 18 from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

Appointments can be made by contacting the Veterinary Clinic at DSN 476-2370. There will be walk-in appointments available, but they will be seen as time allows, and all walk-in appointments must be signed-in with the receptionist by 1:30 p.m. to be seen.

Services will include routine vaccinations, heartworm/feline leukemia tests, and issuance of health certificates. Additional services will be provided at the discretion of the Veterinarian and as time allows. Your pet must be registered with the Veterinary Clinic before services can be provided. Call DSN 476-2370.

National Disability Awareness Month

In conjunction with October being the National Disability Awareness Month, Dinah F. B. Cohen, Director for the Department of Defense Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program will speak to WTU Soldiers and garrison community members Oct. 22 at 2 p.m. in the Vilseck Chapel.

Cohen works closely with senior federal leadership to ensure employees, beneficiaries, and members of the public with disabilities have equal access to federal services and employment.

She is an international speaker on disability policy, reasonable accommodations, accessibility and information technology and its impact on employment of people with disabilities.

All community members are encouraged to attend and learn more about CAP and what this program can do for them, their spouses, and family members.

Commissary offers eco-friendly grocery bags

Vilseck Commissary and the Department of Defense are promoting the DoD-funded Mental Health Self-Assessment Program throughout the month of October. Through this initiative, free eco-friendly grocery bags and refrigerator magnets with a health promotion message will be distributed to commissary customers at local outreach events.

Hohenfels Briefs

Graceland

The Hohenfels Box Seat Theatre is proud to present the Hohenfels entry into the IMCOM-E Festival of One Act Plays, "Graceland" by Ellen Byron.

The play will be performed at the CAC, Bldg. 40 in Hohenfels Friday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 7 p.m.; and Sunday at 3 p.m. The IMCOM-E Festival of One Act Plays will be held at the Roadside Theater in Heidelberg Oct. 10-12 with the Hohenfels entry being performed on Oct. 10.

For more information visit www.mwr-europe.com or contact Joanne Love at DSN 466-2340.

College Night

Hohenfels will host a College Night Oct. 8 from 5:30-8 p.m. at Hohenfels High School. The event can be a huge success with community support.

All you need to do is contact your university or college and let them know

that you need brochures and goodies for 150 students. Now is the time to contact your school. If you would like to represent your school, contact the School Liaison Officer at michele.wolff@us.army.mil.

American Red Cross Health & Safety Classes

Oct. 9: CPR, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Oct. 11: Babysitting, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Oct. 17: CPR and First Aid, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Visit the Red Cross office to sign up for a CPR, First Aid or a Babysitter training class. All classes will be given in Bldg. 10.

Combat Cross Country Championship

The hills of Hohenfels will be the site of the annual U.S. Forces Europe Unit-Level Combat Cross Country Championships Oct. 9. Active duty military personnel will have the opportunity to run with their unit team with the required M16-A1/2 rifle or dummy rubber rifle or M4, Army Combat Uniform, full canteen or camel back, combat boots, first aid pouch, load bearing equipment (web gear with pistol belt) or load bearing vest, soft cap and two empty ammunition pouches.

The race course distance will be 5-8 kilometers and will be run on uneven terrain. Registration will be Oct. 9 from 8:30-10:30 a.m. at the Hohenfels Sportplatz.

The race is planned to start at 11:10 a.m. Unlimited entries are allowed. Teams must consist of at least five but no more than seven active duty members.

Participants must be on active duty the day of the race. The cross country team scoring system will determine team finishes. For more information go to the www.mwr-europe.com Web site or contact Chris Cornelison at DSN 466-2493.

Basic Quilting

A basic quilting class will be held Oct. 11 from 9 a.m.- 1 p.m. Even if you have no sewing experience you can learn this classic art with all the modern twists.

You will make your first small project while learning the basics of rotary cutting, strip piecing, machine quilting and edge binding. These skills can then be applied to future projects that we are happy to help with from start to finish.

There is a \$10 class fee plus supplies. Purchase and wash your material before coming to class. Pre-register and pay at least three days before class. You will receive pre-class instructions at time of sign-up.

Health insurance briefing

The American Foreign Service Pro-

ductive Association is conducting an open season briefing Oct. 14 on their federal employee health benefits program, Dental insurance and long term care insurance will begin at 12:30 p.m. in the DOL Conference Room, Bldg. 315. All U.S. federal employees are invited to attend.

Wood Shop Safety

A wood shop safety class will be held Oct. 18 from 9:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. In this class you will learn to safely use the machinery in the wood shop.

Once you are certified you may come back for help on individual projects. There is a \$10 class fee, and no pre-sign up required. Wear closed-toe shoes and appropriate clothing.

October Book Club

The Hohenfels Book Club book for October will be The Shack by William P. Young. Unfortunately, European libraries do not carry the book and it will have to be purchased by the reader.

The meeting for the October book will be held on Oct. 27 at 5 p.m. in the library. For more information, call the library at DSN 466-1740.

Bowl Your Brains Out

Bowl Your Brains Out at Lane 17 every Monday from 5-9 p.m. Bowl as many games as you want for just \$7 for adults and \$5 for kids 12 and under. Shoe rental included.

Total Mom

ACS New Parent Support Program proudly announces the fall 2008 10-week Total Mom series. Total Mom is all about looking for and finding balance, support and spice in the relationship with your partner.

Learn about personal fitness, parenting tips and much more while increasing your confidence as a mother and a woman. Each week's episode stands alone so you can attend individual sessions comfortably or plan on enjoying the entire series.

Classes are held every Monday from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the Hilltop Chapel Conference Center, Bldg. 6.

Framing class

Learn how to create your own custom frame Saturday from 9:30 a.m.- 1 p.m.

Doing your own custom framing is a great way to personalize your art and awards while saving money. You will learn how to measure and mat your pictures as well as how to cut and put together frames.

Then finish it off for a professional look every time. A \$30 class fee includes supplies to frame a 5"x7" picture. Pre-register and pay at least three days before class.

Hosted by the Grafenwoehr and Vilseck Community and Spouses' Clubs

Crown Jewel Bazaar

October 17 to 19, 2008

Bazaar Location:
Grafenwoehr Field House, Bldg. 547

Ribbon Cutting:
Friday, Oct 17, 11 a.m.

Opening Hours:
Friday, Oct 17, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturday, Oct 18, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Sunday, Oct 19, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Featuring Over 50 of Europe's Finest Vendors!
English Fine China, Rugs, Wines and Cheeses, Antique and Custom-made Furniture, Bavarian Clothing, Italian Porcelain, Polish Pottery, Tapestries and Much More!

Be Treated Like Royalty and Save a Fortune!
Bazaar is open to all military ID card holders. Visa, MasterCard, cash and checks accepted. Sorry, no strollers.

USAA SatoTravel Edelweiss MWR

NAF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

If you are a Family Member who lives within the commuting area of Garrison Grafenwoehr, to include Rose Barracks, and would like to earn extra money by working for any of the various Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities, please visit the NAF personnel Office located in building 244 by gate 3 in Grafenwoehr.

Grafenwoehr Positions Available
Program Assistants - All Child Care Facilities
Food & Beverage Assistants - Bowling
Recreation Aide - Bowling

Rose Barrack Positions Available
Program Assistants - All Child Care Facilities
Food & Beverage Assistants - Bowling
Recreation Aide - Bowling

i♥MY JOB

For more information contact the
NAF personnel Office at CIV 09641-83-6886 or 09641-83-6887.

What’s Happening

Ansbach Briefs

Make a Difference

USAG Ansbach seeks volunteers for Make a Difference Day Oct. 25 in Katterbach and Storck Barracks to clean up areas on the two installations.

Volunteers are asked to show up at the dining facility on Katterbach at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast and then move to the site chosen for cleanup: the pavilion area by the ACS building. At Storck, volunteers are asked to meet at the Storck Barracks ACS at 12:30 p.m. for lunch and then cleanup at Memorial Park.

To find out more on how you can make a difference in the community, call Temeka Cochran, USAG Ansbach Army Volunteer Corps coordinator at DSN 467-2370 or CIV 09802-83-2370.

Benefits, finance help

The Federal Benefits Unit and Defense Finance and Accounting Service-Cleveland will visit Katterbach Oct. 23 from 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the ACS classroom in Bldg. 5817.

The FBU will process Social Security Administration claims for retirement; disability and survivor benefits; Social Security number applications; all post-entitlement activities affecting beneficiaries under the various programs such as change of address, issues involving Direct Deposit, non-receipt of check allegations and death terminations as well as Department of Veteran Affairs survivor claims, education benefits, compensation and pension examinations.

DFAS Cleveland will do a one-on-one audit of a retiree’s account. DFAS will process address changes, Direct Deposit abroad, methods of payments and the retiree account statement.

For more on the visit, call DSN 467-3301 or CIV 09802-83-3301.

Halloween Fun

Halloween Hustle Fun Run Oct. 25 at the Bunch Fitness Center on Storck Barracks. There is a children’s 1-miler at 9 a.m. and a 5-km race at 10 a.m.

Register by Oct. 22 at either the Katterbach or Bunch Fitness centers. For more, call DSN 467-2810 or CIV 09802-83-2810.

Trunk or Treat will be held Oct. 31 from 5-8 p.m. at Katterbach Hangar 2 and the Storck Barracks Dental Clinic parking lot.

People planning to give out candy need to have their cars parked by 4:30 p.m. For more, call DSN 467-4703 or CIV 09841-83-4703.

Library Halloween bash: Oct. 31 at 4 p.m. at the Storck Barracks Community Library. The event features a family costume party and refreshments. For more, call DSN 467-4675 or CIV 09841-83-4675.

Bowling Costume Party Oct. 31 at 6 p.m. at Apache Lanes on Storck Barracks. The event features a costume contest and pizza specials. For more, call DSN 467-4530 or CIV 09841-83-4530.

Halloween Parent and Child 40-frame Game Tournament: Oct. 31 at 6 p.m. at Action Lanes on Katterbach Kaserne. Cost is \$15.

Register by Oct. 30. For more or to register, call DSN 467-2638 or CIV 09802-83-2638.

BOSS Haunted House Oct. 31 from 6-9 p.m. at the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers facility on Bismarck Kaserne (under the post exchange).

Cost is a BOSS Morale Booster item

to send to a deployed single Soldier. For more, send an e-mail to ans-mwr@eur.army.mil.

Hallelujah Roundup

The Katterbach Chapel’s Hallelujah Roundup takes place Oct. 31 from 5-7 p.m. at the chapel. The free event features food, games and fun for elementary school-aged children and younger.

For more, call Destiney Sanchez at CIV 09802-95-7308.

Harvest Festival

The Storck Barracks Chapel hosts its Harvest Festival Oct. 31 from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

The event features free food, drinks, games, crafts, and information on chapel ministries and programs. Be sure to wear your family-friendly costumes, said chapel officials.

For more, send an e-mail to jenn-2jody@yahoo.com or call Jennifer Smith at CIV 0160-297-9757.

One-Act Plays

The Terrace Playhouse presents “An Evening of One-Act Plays: The Genesis of Relationships,” Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

Each show present three short plays about the “first couple,” from Ansbach award-winning theatre.

Cost for the live entertainment shows is \$9 for adults, \$7 for students and \$20 for families. For more, call DSN 468-7636 or CIV 0981-183-636.

Cycling program

Ansbach’s cycling program is in full swing. The 15-k mixed terrain bike rides include local bike trails Sunday and Oct. 26 at 2 p.m., and local bike trails Tuesday at 4:30 p.m. Meet at the Katterbach Fitness Center.

The rides are designed for riders over the age of 16 and helmets are required. For more, call DSN 467-2810 or CIV 09802-83-2810.

Burger King hours

Burger King changed its hours to 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily with breakfast service Saturdays and Sundays from 8-10:30 a.m.

Nov. 3, the daily hours will be 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. The dining room will close at 7 p.m., but the drive-thru will remain open until 8 p.m.

CYS Services renewal

People with children on the Child, Youth and School Services waiting list for full-time child care must renew their status with central registration every 90 days to stay active on the list.

CER provided everyone on the list with a one-time renewal, so people on the list should make sure they renew by Dec. 31. People can call, e-mail or stop by the CER office to do this.

People who do not renew every 90 days will be taken off of the list and not contacted when space becomes available.

For more, call CER at Katterbach at DSN 467-2533 or CIV 09802-83-2533, and at Storck Barracks at DSN 467-4880 or CIV 09841-83-4880.

Fuel purchase requirement

AAFES requires people buying fuel at their facilities to show their identification card, Germany fuel ration card/gas coupons and vehicle registration prior to pumping.

Requiring the check prior to pumping is necessary to protect the tax-free fuel benefit for U.S. forces in Germany, according to an AAFES press release.

Customs requirements established by the German Ministry of Finance must be

complied with as required by the Status of Forces Agreement.

VA brief

The Army Career and Alumni Program hosts a Veterans Affairs brief for USAG Ansbach Soldiers and family members on VA benefits and services.

The briefing takes Oct. 24. The briefings are open to transitioning Soldiers, their families and retirees.

For times and locations, call ACAP at DSN 467-3312 or CIV 09802-83-3312.

WANTED: iPod thieves

The Ansbach CID is offering a \$750 reward for information leading to the apprehension and conviction of the people who stole electronic devices from the Post Exchange on Storck Barracks June 18 or 19.

The items included iPods, Sony Mylo Communicators, and Sony Digital cameras.

People with information should contact the Ansbach CID office at DSN 467-2485 or CIV 09802-83-2485 or the military police at DSN 467-4565 or CIV 09841-83-4565.

The payout of cash rewards to military and federal employees for information leading to a conviction is contingent upon their actions regarding the information provided, officials added.

Schweinfurt Briefs

Harvest festival

Volunteers are needed for the annual harvest festival at Schweinfurt’s Ledward gym Oct. 31. Food and games run from 6 to 8:30 p.m. and crews are needed to set up, tear down, and clean up the event. Volunteers are needed to run games and tables. Call 0162-270-4688 to learn how you can be a part of the fun.

Daddy basic training

Are you soon to be a father or is another one on the way? Army Community Service offers Daddy Basic Training for new or expecting fathers Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This highly entertaining and interactive hands-on training teaches the required skills that all dads need to have. For more information, or to sign up, call DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933.

Downtown stores Sunday opening

Come shop in downtown Schweinfurt on Oct. 26 when shops are open for their occasional Sunday business. Most stores will be open with from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Community flea market

Shop and find great deals at Schweinfurt Elementary School’s flea market Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the multi-purpose room from the teacher parking lot. Shopping is open to all U.S. ID card holders. If you are interested in renting a full or half table to sell your stuff, email lisaeubanks@yahoo.com.

Watch ice hockey

Watch a Schweinfurt ice hockey game Friday at the Ice Dome in Schweinfurt starting at 8 p.m. Schweinfurt Might Dogs play ESV Pinguine Koenigsbrunn. The next game takes place Oct. 26 against Pfaffenhofen Ice Dogs at 6 p.m.

Walk for the cure

Join Schweinfurt’s walk for the cure at Kessler Fitness Center Saturday starting at 9 a.m. Be part of the efforts to promote breast cancer awareness by bringing a friend to walk five kilometers. The run is open to all I.D. card holders. For more information, call DSN 354-6735 or CIV 09721-96-6735.

Concerts

Attend the annual concert of the mandoline and guitar orchestra at the “Naturfreundehaus” Friedrich-Ebert-Strasse 1 in Schweinfurt starting at 7:30 p.m. Saturday. Or try the taste of an a-capella “Cash-n-go” concert at the parish hall in Volkach Sunday at 7 p.m.

BOSS Mystery Castle, Knight’s dinner

Take a tour with Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers Nov. 8 to visit a castle’s torture chamber, search for a lost friend, and enjoy a medieval dinner. Bus departs Schweinfurt 10 a.m. and returns by midnight. Cost per person is 120 euro

which includes a six-course meal with some beverages, transportation, entry fees to two castles, and entertainment. Call Finney Recreation Center at DSN 353-8476 or CIV 09721-96-8476 to reserve a seat before Oct. 29 deadline.

Fall fair

The fall fair and market takes place Oct. 23 – 26 at the Messeplatz near the theater in Schweinfurt. Fair opens Thursday through Saturday 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Sunday hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Couples’ boot camp

Compete in a commissary shopping trip Monday from 2 - 4 p.m. ACS offers this interactive couple’s class as part of the Couples’ Boot Camp series. Build a family crest Oct. 28 from 2 - 4 p.m. at ACS to wrap up the month. For more information, call DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933.

Bulk trash

Bulk trash will be picked up from Askren Manor, Yorktown Village, and government-leased housing Oct. 28. Put bulk items out prior to 7 a.m. the day of pick-up, but no earlier than the day before. Bulk trash is hose items too large to transport in your vehicle. For more information, call SORT coordinator at DSN 354-6201 or CIV 0162-270-9403.

Crafts Studio field trip

Join the Crafts Studio on a field trip Sunday to the Schlitz Heimat Museum, the Hunfeld seed carpet and the Alsfeld flea market. Vehicle departs from the studio at 8 a.m. and returns by 6 p.m. For more information, or to sign up, call DSN 354-6903 or CIV 09721-96-6903.

Frankenstein’s Castle

Take a family-friendly trip or a scary adult trip to Frankenstein’s Castle in Darmstadt. Adults only are invited to the trip on Oct. 25 with a bus departure from Conn at 4:30 p.m. Bring your kids on the family-friendly trip Oct. 26 with a bus departure at 12:30 p.m. Fourteen years of age to adult are 24 euro per ticket and children 5 to 13 years old are 12 euro. To reserve a seat, call Finney Recreation Center at DSN 353-8476 or CIV 09721-96-8476.

Show your talent

Join the open mic night at Finney Recreation Center every Wednesday evening beginning at 6:30 p.m. Performance is open to anyone to sing, play an instrument, read poetry, practice stand-up comedy or just to have a good time. For more information, call DSN 353-8476 or CIV 09721-96-8476.

Basketball deadline

Mens and womens teams are cur-

rently forming and more players are needed. Registration at Finney Fitness Center ends Oct. 28. A team coach and players meeting will be held Nov. 12. Practices begin Nov. 17 at 6 p.m. Games are on Saturdays and Sundays. All I.D. card holders over 18 years of age, and not in high school, may participate. For more information, call Finney at DSN 353-8234 or CIV 09721-96-8234.

Book club

The community is invited to attend the adult book club at Ledward Library Oct. 30 at 5:15 p.m. to discuss the book, “Five Quarters of the Orange” by Joanne Harris. For more information or a copy of the book, call DSN 354-6487 or CIV 09721-96-1740.

Learn to control anger

Do you know your anger style? Come to Army Community Service’s class on anger management at Ledward ACS building 242 Tuesday to find out ways to deal with and control your anger. This three-part series takes place on Tuesdays from 3 to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933.

Lunch Bunch

Join Schweinfurt’s Lunch Bunch Oct. 23 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Sign up for the carpool or call to get directions to the restaurant at DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933. Children are welcome! Please bring euro for lunch.

Computer classes

ACS is offering free computer classes from 8 a.m. to 12:50 p.m. Call for location. A certificate of completion will be issued at the end of each class. For more information, or to sign up, call ACS at DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933. Classes include Basic Microsoft Excel I on Monday; Basic Microsoft Excel II on Tuesday; Microsoft PowerPoint on Oct. 22; Microsoft Access Oct. 23

Thrift Savings Plan

Learn strategies to maximize your Thrift Savings Plan investment Oct. 22 from 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. at ACS. For more information, or to sign up, call DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933.


Saturday child care

Sign up for Child, Youth, and School Services’ Super Saturday Respite Care Nov. 22. Children ages 6 weeks to fifth-grade will be cared for from 9:30 to 2:30 p.m.


The CDC and the SAS fees are \$15. One meal is included. Children must be registered with CYS and also have current immunizations. Reservation deadline is Nov. 15. To sign up, call CYS at DSN 354-6517 or CIV 09721-96-6414.

HISPANIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Saturday, 18 October 2008
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Prague has a beautiful old town that invites tourists to take a stroll and enjoy the rich history the city has to offer.

This photo was taken looking down from the Town Hall Clock Tower watching the crowds gather for the show.

Photos by Lou Stagger

Visit Prague, Europe’s Golden City

by ALICE ADLER
Special to the Bavarian News

If you ache to travel and want see one of Europe’s grandest cities, consider a long weekend in Prague.

About a three-hour drive from anywhere within USAG Grafenwoehr, Prague is worth a visit. This grand capital of the Czech Republic has something for everyone: historians, artists, party animals, and shoppers.

Prague Castle, a huge hilltop complex of houses, churches, and monuments, dominates the city. Most prominent is the grandly gothic St. Vitus Cathedral. This house of worship boasts 21 ornate side chapels and stunning stained glass windows.

Be sure to check out the cathedral’s exterior. The façade is decorated with statues of saints and beautiful bronze doors with relief work depicting the construction of the Cathedral. The back of the cathedral is impressive with an intricate network of flying buttresses.

After circling the cathedral, wander through the buildings of Castle Hill. Bring a guidebook that explains the historic places you will pass.

After Castle Hill, walk down one of the long sets of stairs and make your way to Charles Bridge. One of many bridges spanning the Vltava River, the Charles Bridge is by far the best known and most visited sight in Prague.

This 1,700-foot pedestrian walkway is known for two things that line its walls. First is the 30 statues along both sides of this celebrated bridge. The statues mainly depict saints and religious figures, and saints both famous and unknown are represented here. St. John the Baptist and Saint Wences-

las are alongside lesser known Saint Lutigarde and Saint Adalbert.

The other attraction along the bridge is the many artisans and musicians that congregate here daily.

Paintings and drawings, handmade jewelry, pottery, and other craft items are for sale on both sides of this ancient path.

Note: Return to the Charles Bridge at night, after the salesmen have gone. The Cathedral on Castle Hill remains lit until midnight, making Charles Bridge a wonderful post-dinner stroll.

After crossing Charles Bridge, head for Old Town Square. The square is surrounded by beautiful baroque buildings and churches, and boasts numerous cafes. Stop for coffee and gaze around one of the most beautiful town squares in Europe.

One of the most popular sights in Prague is in Old Town Square - the Astronomical Clock, an amazing scientific instrument to behold. Extremely complex and built in 1410, the clock does not actually show the time.

Its many dials and hands show phases of the moon, seasons, dates, equinoxes, and various Christian holy days.

Twice a day, at 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., the clock chimes and its glockenspiel kicks into action, displaying a morality play with the 12 Apostles sliding by as figures depicting greed, death, vanity, and corruption dance below.

A history buff

will want to visit some of the oldest sights in European Jewish history.

The Old-New Synagogue, built in 1270, is Europe’s oldest Jewish house of worship. It is still in use today, more than 700 years later.

Across the street from the synagogue is the darkly beautiful Old Jewish Cemetery, one of the world’s most crowded burial grounds.

In the 15th century, laws did not allow Prague’s Jewish population much room to bury their dead, so graves were dug to accommodate 12 bodies vertically.

The gravestones were crowded together on the surface, one in front of another, resulting in a sea of gravestones that serve as a stark reminder of the long, hard history of Jews in Europe.

Shoppers will certainly not be disappointed in Prague. Local artisans turn out beautiful works of all kinds. Pottery, paintings, and other pieces of art can be purchased from street-side vendors as well as at upscale galleries.

Deep red garnets, a semiprecious stone mined in the Czech Republic, are sold at every turn in every conceivable kind of jewelry. Some of the world’s finest crystal and glassware glitters in well-lit store windows.

If nightlife is what you seek, Prague delivers. Upscale dining, smoky bars, pulsing nightclubs, and classical concerts are available nearly every night of the week.

Prague is a truly international city, and as you amble through the theaters, bars and clubs, the multilingual babble of visitors from around the globe will often astound.

No matter why you visit Prague - history, art, nightlife - you simply must experience the most enchanting activity the city has to offer. Put away your map and guidebook and - get lost.

That’s right. Wander the labyrinths of twisting alleyways and convoluted side streets. Every turn will bring you face-to-face with stunning architecture, cute shops, quaint restaurants, and centuries of history.

A few hours wandering the back streets of Prague is truly an experience that will not be forgotten.

This travel article was originally published in 2006.



The Astronomical Clock, an amazing scientific instrument built in 1410.



Bohemian crystal chandelier in the Church of St. Nicholas.



Stained glass window in the Church of Saint Nicholas built in 1732.



The impressive Charles Bridge Gate on the city’s Old Town side.

Ansbach residents make a difference, aid community beautification project

by RONALD TOLAND JR.
Bavarian News

Community members get a chance to clean up their Army Homes and give back to the community during fall cleanup Monday, Oct. 24 and Make a Difference Day Oct. 25.

From recycling to composting of large amounts of branches, leaves and grass cuttings, to disposing of hazardous waste and bulk items, fall cleanup is the time to get rid of it--clean up your Army Family home, take pride in it and make it a pleasant place to live, work and play, said garrison officials.

"The intent is to get everyone involved. It is our home and we should treat it as such," said Sgt. 1st Class Rogelio Lopezvasquez, USAG Ansbach lead on the fall cleanup.

The week is broken down by days and the Katterbach Self Help Store in Bldg. 5518 supplies tools and provides free trash bags--each command dictates the duty uniform for the day, Lopezvasquez said.

Monday is unit areas; Tuesday, barracks; Wednesday, housing (on and off post); Thursday, agencies; and Friday, last-minute cleanup and inspections from the garrison command sergeant major.

The city of Ansbach plans to assist as well--providing free item removal for residents in

Bleidorn, Katterbach, Bismarck and Barton housing areas.

On Oct. 22, from 7 a.m. - 3 p.m., the city will collect bulk refuse (e.g. old furniture, animal cages or carriers, baby furniture, beds, buckets, balcony furniture, carpets, floor coverings, large console for TVs, mattresses, suitcases, wall units, etc.). Residents are asked to place all bulk items in the grassy areas on the main roads, next to their buildings early in the morning, said Jutta Seefried, Sort or Recycle Trash coordinator for USAG Ansbach's Environmental Management Division.

However, Seefried said the city will not pick up hazardous waste, batteries or tires. People should discard of such items appropriately at installation recycle yards or hazardous waste disposal facilities.

In addition to fall cleanup, the annual Make a Difference Day--a national day of volunteers helping others--rounds out the week Oct. 25.

"Make a Difference Day is a national event (in the U.S.) that is about

more than cleaning up. It's about giving back to the community," said Temeka Cochran, coordinator for the local MADD project.

"Every community decides how best to do that. Ansbach is focusing on cleaning up, so that is how we are giving back this year.

"There will be a kick-off breakfast at 7:30 a.m. at the Katterbach Yellow Ribbon Room and

“ **Make a Difference Day is a national event that is about more than cleaning up. It’s about giving back to the community.** ”

Temeka Cochran
MADD project coordinator



Photo by Jim Hughes

Scott Marko of the Katterbach Fitness Center and Dan Riley, the director of the USAG Ansbach FMWR, work to beautify the area in front of the center and commissary Sept. 6 during a garrison beautification volunteer drive.

then the plan is to clean the area in front of the YRR," she said.

At Storck Barracks, lunch will be served at the Army Community Service with plans to work on cleaning up Memorial Park from 12:30-5 p.m.

"Cleaning up and beautifying the area is a USAG Ansbach command-focused commitment--we want everyone to take the time and make a difference in the community," said Cochran.

Tools are provided, but volunteers may bring

other garden utensils and gloves.

To get involved and help make Your Army Family Home beautiful, contact Cochran at DSN 467-2372, or CIV 09802-83-2372 If you need information on trash and other disposal or removal measures, call Seefried at DSN 467-3403 or CIV 09802-83-3403.

For more information regarding fall cleanup efforts and to pitch in, call Lopezvasquez, at DSN 468-7954 or CIV 0981-183-7954.

Bike Club hits local trails to get fit, explore Germany

Story and photo by
RONALD TOLAND JR.
Bavarian News

A group of community cyclers dared the elements to enjoy a day of biking around a scenic 15-km lakefront trail at Brombachsee Oct. 5.

The bikers braved mixed-terrain trails to work out, meet new people ,and be a part of the newly-formed bike club in Ansbach--and they don't want to keep all the fun to themselves.

"I enjoy exercising and going out on my bike, plus the area is great for it--we should see more of it," said the program coordinator, Sara Evans, adding that the club seeks new members to enjoy the many biking trails and sights in the local area.

Evans said the idea for the club started during a ride she went on with friends.

She thought it should be a more regular event, and the Ansbach Bike Club, supported by Family, Morale,

Welfare and Recreation's Outdoor Recreation program, was born.

Evans sees the club as a fitness and social outlet for members.

"Germany is so pretty and there is so much to see here. We thought we could form a club here--why not? See the countryside and get fit as well," she said.

"We all need to see more of Germany. A lot of people come here and just stay on the base--they do nothing and see nothing. With this club, it is part of the community--getting out and seeing things. Plus we all want to be fit," said Evans.

She also noted that the club is for anyone--from single Soldiers to

civilians to Family members.

Rider Laura Waid said that for her, the club is about camaraderie.

"It is a motivating incentive for me to come and meet people rather than go do things like this alone," she said. "A riding group is much more fun, and the social aspect motivates me to get out and be fit."

Another rider, Mark Juliano, can't wait for the next event.

"This is an amazing program. It was awesome and if you have not been there (Brombachsee), you need to go," he said.

The next 15-km ride is Sunday on local bike trails.

The group leaves from Katterbach Fitness Center at 2 p.m. Bikes can

“ **A riding group is much more fun, and the social aspect motivates me to be fit.** ”

Laura Waid
Bike club rider



Laura Waid gets a hand loading her bike from Zeljko Stjepanovic and Mark Juliano for the Ansbach Bike Club's trip to Brombachsee Oct. 5.

be rented from Katterbach's Outdoor Recreation Office.

For information on the bike club

or to join in on the fun, call the Katterbach Fitness Center at DSN 467-2810 or CIV 09802-83-2810.



Photo by Jim Hughes

STRIKE A POSE!

Members of the NFL's Washington Redskins cheerleading team perform at the Katterbach Fitness Center Oct. 4.

The self-described "First Ladies of Football" team put on a show for the USAG Ansbach community as part of its Armed Forces Entertainment tour through Europe.

12th CAB Soldiers return home after ‘magnificent’ performance in Iraq

Story and photos by
JIM HUGHES

USAG Ansbach Public Affairs Officer

“Magnificent!”

That’s the word used by Col. Timothy J. Edens, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade commander, to sum up the performance of the unit’s Soldiers during their 15-month deployment to Iraq.

Homecoming ceremonies from August to the end of September brought home to Ansbach almost 3,500 Soldiers who deployed last summer.

“Great! Stupendous! Wonderful! I mean, pick any positive word and that is how we all feel—very, very good,” Edens said about being home upon his return Sept. 25.

“It’s been a real treat to see the looks on the Soldiers’ faces as they walk in here getting ready to see their families again. It’s a great day!”

But before the happy homecomings, there were challenges aplenty for Ansbach’s heroes—including issues with logistics and maintenance—but in true Griffin fashion, they were all overcome, Edens said.

“Just good old fashioned hard work, ingenuity and teamwork,” the colonel said.

“The one thing besides the fact that we got them all home that I’m most proud about is the absolute team spirit that just permeates the whole 12th CAB.

“Challenges? Yes, there were many,” the colonel added. “But they were met and defeated

in detail by this great outfit. I couldn’t be more proud of the 12th CAB Soldiers.”

With two of the R4 complete—redeployment and reintegration—reconstitution (equipment repair) and retraining are up next for CAB Soldiers.

“Retraining to get ready for the next deployment—which we think is in the nearer future than what we formerly anticipated,” Edens said.

“We told the families that about a month ago—telling them it looks like the next deployment has been accelerated. But we still have at least 12 months, and in most cases more, at home station with our families. It’ll probably be post-January when the training really starts to form up and take hold.”

Such is life in today’s Army: deploy, come home, rest a bit, train up and deploy again.

But for the most part, CAB Soldiers are maintaining positive attitudes despite the challenging times, Edens said.

“It’s euphoria right now—everyone’s happy to be home,” he said. “I think there is a certain amount of ‘it’s hard to believe’ that we were able to pull off 15 months with no casualties—either from the enemy or accidents—we’re very, very proud of that.

“There’s also a degree of ‘What’s next?’ We are a deployed Army and it is the same people deploying over and over again,” Edens continued. “So, some of them are asking hard questions (about life in the Army).”

And the concerns are valid, he admits.

“People are on their third or fourth deployments, so the facts are there and the jury is out—these are deployable times,” he said.

“For those deciding that perhaps they have had enough of the Army, I would say ‘Thank you,’ and I mean it sincerely.

“I’d rather they stay and continue to fight and train together, but, you know, they’ve given and I thank them for it. Stick it out with the Army, the 12th CAB and USAREUR—it’s a great way to live and serve.

“But by and large, I think they like being on the U.S. Army Europe and 12th CAB team—they like this community, they’re proud of this community, they take ownership for a lot of things going on here that are positive. Money is starting to flow and things are happening at Ansbach.”

Edens’ thoughts are proven through a non-battlefield distinction the unit earned while deployed.

“This was the first unit in USAREUR and the first unit in OIF to meet 100 percent of its retention goals—over a thousand Soldiers re-upped while downrange,” he said.

“That speaks volumes for not just the career counselors, but for leadership in the CAB. From the battalion commander and sergeants major down to first line supervisors—they all took a keen interest in keeping quality Soldiers in our formation and it paid off. We kept them in the Army and we kept them alive.”

And now is not the time for that to change, Edens added.

He said many Soldiers will want to blow off some steam after the long deployment, but he and Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy met with every CAB Soldier not on duty or on detail to tell them to be careful.

“Continue to be vigilant—take care of one another,” he said to the Soldiers. “You did it in combat—there is no excuse for not doing it in peace time in the garrison environment.

“Will there be some who push that and exceed that? Absolutely—I think it is human nature,” Edens added.

“But I think we will see that 12th CAB Soldiers in large measure will step up and take responsibility for their actions and take care of one another.”

The commander also acknowledged that some Soldiers might need help after the constant stresses of deployment.

“We encourage Soldiers to get help—not just for post-traumatic stress disorder, but also marriage issues or personal problems,” he said.

“Get help—it is out there. You have to be of sound mind—we have to have you there. If the way to get that is to see a doctor or other helping

agency, then take care of it. We need healthy Soldiers in formation—and families. Families need help too.”

And while many families are busy reuniting, the families and Soldiers of the 3-159th Aviation Regiment are dealing with separation.

That unit replaced its sister unit, the 2-159th, in August.

“That switch over went perfectly,” Edens said. “I know those Soldiers will do a great job in Iraq, and I know the CAB and the garrison will do a great job taking care of the families.”

Edens concluded with kind words for those who supported the CAB from Germany.

“Thanks to the great U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach team, the local German communities and our families—families have contributed at least

50 percent to the success of this brigade,” he said.

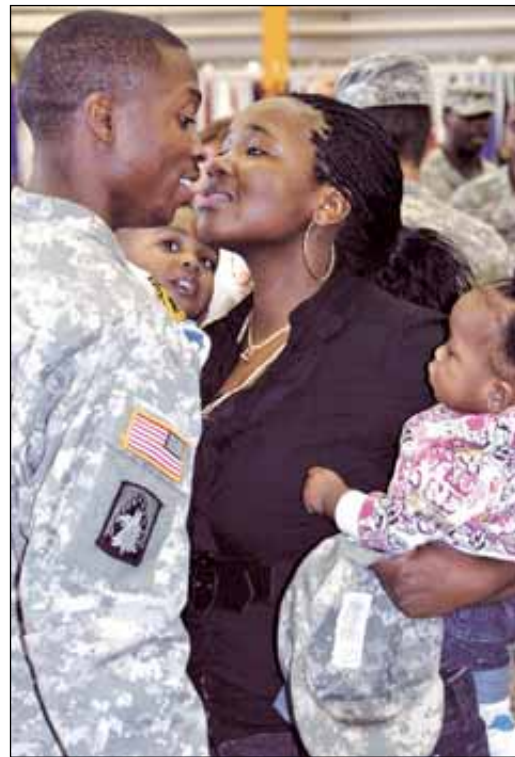
“It is absolutely firm in my mind that we were successful because we were not worried about our families. We were able to focus and concentrate on the mission at hand knowing that Lt. Col. Guy Zero (rear detachment commander), the rear detachments and the FRGs (family readiness groups) all had the home fires burning and everything was going to be OK.”

It is absolutely firm in my mind that we were successful because we were not worried about our families. We were able to focus and concentrate on the mission...

Col. Timothy Edens
12th CAB commander



Col. Timothy Edens, commander of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, leads a formation of Griffin Soldiers into Hangar 2 during a welcome home ceremony on Katterbach Kaserne Sept. 25.



Spc. Anthony Brown, 5-158th Aviation Regiment, emotionally reunites with his wife and their children Sept. 25.

Program ensures people with disabilities keep contributing, provides assistant technology and services to wounded

Story and photo by
RONALD TOLAND JR.
Bavarian News

Being disabled doesn’t mean people can’t play critical roles in mission accomplishment.

That is the underlying theme of the Department of Defense Computer/Electronics Accommodations Program that ensures disabled persons receive equal access and opportunities in federal employment, said Ida Ruff-Geppert, USAG Ansbach’s Equal Employment Officer heading the local initiative.

Dinah Cohen, DOD’s director of CAP will visit Ansbach to speak to the community about the program Oct. 23 at 1:30 p.m. at the theater on Bismarck Kaserne.

Ensuring and providing free access to assistive technology and services to wounded service persons and federal

employees is the purpose of the CAP—providing real solutions for real needs, said Ruff-Geppert.

According to the program’s fact sheet, the CAP removes barriers to federal employment opportunities by eliminating the costs of assistive technology to the applicant and employer—costs funded and supplied entirely by the Department of Defense.

The 18-year old program has a full range of assistive technology—services and equipment, like individualized needs assessments to electronic equipment accommodations, said Ruff-Geppert.

“This program lets us know what is available. It supplies for the blind, hard of hearing, physically disabled, mentally challenged...” she said.

The program allows for disabled servicemembers to take the equipment with them to their next employer—

Federal or not—or if they need it later on in their careers after military service, Ruff-Geppert added.

“The program applies to those already in the federal workforce—as a civilian—or who want to get into federal service and need assistant technology,” she said. “The CAP provides the technology to assist to do the job—it supports servicemembers, federal employees with disabilities, federal managers, supervisors and information technology professionals.”

She further explained that employee workstations are

supplied with a wide variety of equipment designed to accommodate people with disabilities, based on individual needs. CAP increases employment opportunities and access to the information technology environment in the United States and abroad.

The program encourages and opens doors for people with disabilities to continue to work, Ruff-Geppert said.

It is also peace of mind to know that help is available if they want to continue to work and do the job...

Ida Ruff-Geppert
Equal Employment Officer

“It is an opportunity to continue to work, and a peace of mind for families to know that spouses can, if they want, work for the federal government and have the devices needed to assist in getting the job done.

“It is also peace of mind to know that help is available if they want to continue to work and do the job—being able to give an individual a chance to continue their employment or to gain employment without barriers,” she added.

People employed by a component of DOD—or one of the other federal agencies that has a partnership with CAP—are eligible for CAP services.

People who would like more information about disabilities in the workplace and what CAP offers can contact the Ansbach Equal Employment Office by calling DSN 468-7733 or CIV 0981-183-733 or visit www.tricare.mil/cap.

New manual covers full spectrum training

FM 7.0 details changes, will be released next month

by GARY SHEFTICK
Army News Service

The Army has sent a new manual for training to the printer and it should be released to the field in about six weeks, members of the Association of the U.S. Army were told Oct. 6.

The new FM 7.0 "prescribes the fundamental changes in how we are training our Army for full-spectrum operations," said Brig. Gen. Robert Abrams, deputy commander for training at the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Abrams told the symposium audience at the AUSA annual meeting that there are six "big ideas" covered in the new field manual. The first one, "train as you fight," remains as true today as when it was first heralded in 1988, he said.

Secondly, though, the manual aims to "change the Army's training mindset" to prepare Soldiers for the conditions they will likely face in future battle, Abrams said. He added that those conditions will likely be something between insurgency and general war.

"We still train to standard," Abrams said. "The standards remain, but the conditions have changed."

The mission-essential task list, or METL, remains of central importance in the new manual, Abrams said. But he explained that there are two types: The Core METL, which covers missions that each unit was designed to perform. Then there's the Directed METL - the specific tasks that a unit

will perform in theater on an upcoming deployment.

Many units today are focusing their training almost exclusively on their DMETL, said Maj. Gen. John A. Yingling, G-3/5/7 for U.S. Forces Command. DMETL focus is necessary, Yingling said, because unit "dwell times" between deployments are currently less than 18 months. As dwell times increase, that will allow more focus on the Core METL, Yingling said, explaining that will build "strategic depth."

The new manual also requires a dialog between commanders and their subordinate units, Abrams said. He said this is especially important with the limited time units now have for force generation.

"We used to issue training guidance and have this quarterly training brief," Abrams said. "Now we mandate that a dialog will occur from higher to lower."

Lastly, the new training manual allows commanders flexibility, Abrams said. He said for missions where standards don't yet exist, commanders must be agile and decide how to train.

Abrams spoke as part of a Land Warfare Symposium titled "Training for Full Spectrum Operations." The symposium was led by Maj. Gen. Robert Lennox, the Army's assistant deputy chief of staff for operations and training, G-3/5/7.

Lennox emphasized right from the start that one of the major challenges in training today is the short dwell time units have between deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Brig. Gen. Richard Longo, director of training for G-3, said the Army's goal in the past was to ensure that troops never faced a situation in combat for which they had not trained. Because of time limits now, though, he said no unit can train for all conditions it might face, so training for agility is important.

Lt. Gen. Richard Lynch, commanding general of III Corps, showed a video highlighting his recent deployment to Iraq as commander of the 3rd Infantry Division and Multi-National Division-Central.

Lynch said after about six months of full-spectrum operations south of Baghdad, his units at 60 patrol bases shifted their focus to stability operations and strengthening the local government and economy. He said this included helping the Iraqis bolster their fish farming and poultry raising.

"Soldiers transformed the battlefield by meeting the needs of the Iraqi people," Lynch said. He added that Soldiers need to have the agility, though, to switch from non-kinetic operations to full-spectrum combat on a moment's notice. He used an example of when one of his units was called from south of Baghdad to help with operations in Sadr City.

"You've got to be prepared at all times," Lynch said. "You're always working outside your comfort zone these days."

The Army doesn't currently have adequate facilities to train troops for "non-lethal operations" like building a local government," Lynch said. "Yet we spend 80 percent of our time doing that over there (in Iraq)."

Lynch said during his time in Iraq, it was "transparent" to him whether a Soldier or unit came from the active Army, National Guard or Army Reserve.

"This is a brand new reserve component, with an incredible experience factor," said Lt. Gen. Thomas Miller, commander of First

U.S. Army. He said Guard and Reserve units come to mobilization stations prepared and demonstrate resiliency. Yet there are a number of challenges that remain in mobilization, Miller said.

Medical standards are one of the mobilization challenges, Miller said. "Different doctors see different things," he said, citing the need for a unified standard at mobilization sites.

Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, chief of the Army Reserve and commander of the U.S. Army Reserve Command, said there's not enough time to do all the full-spectrum training needed at mobilization stations, so one of the USARC initiatives is to accomplish some of that training pre-mobilization.

The challenge, Stultz said, is that most reserve centers don't have the facilities for full-spectrum training. So USARC is establishing regional training centers, he said, and the command is working to ensure those centers have the newest equipment.

Brig. Gen. Ray Carpenter, special assistant for training to the director of the Army National Guard, said that training Soldiers ahead of time means more "boots on the ground" time in theater. But he said "cross-leveling" or drawing troops from around the country to fill a Guard unit deploying, remains a readiness problem. Units can't be trained ahead of time if they're not fully manned until after they reach the mobilization site, he said.

"In all honesty, we haven't solved that problem yet," Carpenter said. "We're still sending units to mobilization and cross-leveling."

We train to standard... The standards remain, but the conditions have changed.

Brig. Gen. Robert Abrams
Training, Combined Arms Center



U.S. Army photo

Soldiers must be trained for the full spectrum of operations when they deploy, officials say, and the new FM 7.0 will provide the standards when fielded in about six weeks.

Myth busted: scientists unveil high-tech Army

Story and Photo by
JACQUELINE HAMES
Army News Service

Advancements in science and technology that support full-spectrum operations, like exoskeletons, were discussed Wednesday at the annual meeting and exposition of the Association of the United States Army.

The forum "Busting the Low-Tech Myth: Army S&T Support to Full Spectrum Operations" provided presentations on how experimental and applied technologies show the Army has advanced across the board, from recruiting to technology in theater.

Lt. Gen. Ross Thompson, military deputy to the assistant secretary of the Army for Acquisitions, Logistics and Technology opened the panel with a report on how to grow the AL&T workforce in order to aid research and development.

"We're going to be 'insourcing' more things than we've been outsourcing lately," Thompson said.

Other presenters went on to discuss the importance of recruiting future generations to research and operate technologies, and how technology itself plays an important part in the recruiting; how technology helps facilitate the ability to track business, the significance of internal research and external commercial partnerships, and the technological advancements themselves, both in the experimental and applied phases.

Nanoflyers and Exoskeletons
"Advancement in computers and our computational capabilities is enormous," said Dr. Thomas Killion, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for research and technology and its chief scientist. The LandWarrior system, the technology in the back of a Stryker vehicle, allows us to do things we would have never been capable of before, he explained. "That's why we are a really a high-tech Army."

Current technologies in the field include precision munitions, unmanned vehicles from

Future Combat Systems, and hybrid-electric power sources, Killion said. But these applied technologies are not the only things that make the Army high-tech; experimental systems and advanced research also make the Army more developed.

The Army has invested heavily in nano-technology and biotechnology, Killion said. "Nano-technology in terms of designing new materials from the ground up, atom by atom, to provide new properties" in terms of protection, sensing and monitoring the condition of the Soldier himself.

"Biotechnology, in terms of really mimicking biology to come up with new ideas for protection, sensing, communications, for doing things in

ways that billions of years of evolution have helped living things to do things, and exploiting that knowledge to design man-made systems," he said.

The Army is developing training avatars, computer generated simulations that will react to and interact with Soldiers intelligently, as well as researching sensors that monitor brain functions, which could lead to enhanced prosthesis control, Killion said.

During his presentation, Killion ran two videos of technologies still being experimented with: exoskeletons and nanoflyers.

The exoskeleton is a robotic device the Soldier wears like a full body suit. It would enhance Soldier performance, increasing strength without losing agility, and potentially developing into an entirely covered system -- a little like the protective suit worn in the recent film "Ironman."

Nanoflyers, Killion explained, weigh about as much as a penny and resemble tiny helicopters, able to fit into a backpack easily. The will serve as urban-interior surveillance technology, and can either hover inside buildings or be placed inconspicuously on a shelf for stationary monitoring.

Killion emphasized that in order to continue

technological advancements the Army must foster science and engineering career paths.

"Tomorrow's technology is in the minds of today's youth," he said.

Recruiting for the Future

Part of developing and maintaining a high-tech Army is having the manpower to research, develop and operate the business and technologies -- which means recruitment, Thompson said.

Thompson explained how the AL&T is expanding its workforce, both on the civilian side and the military side. Currently, there are roughly 38,500 civilians in the workforce and he projects doubling that amount through 2012. On the military side, there are less than 16,000 people, but that's expected to increase by 178 in the contract area, and 149 other military.

"All those acquisition career fields require highly trained people; it's not just the PhD scientists -- it's the business school graduates that understand basics economics and finance and can help us put together a good contract instrument," he said.

Ed Walters, chief marketing officer for the Army, spoke about the new Army Experience Center, a recruiting center in Philadelphia that uses advanced technology and marketing theories.

Based on the concept of experiential marketing, the Army Experience Center provides a relaxed environment for recruiters to interact with young people and their parents, Walters said.

The center is futuristic in appearance, complete with a command center where visitors can be briefed virtually by actual Soldiers. State-of-the-art gaming stations, touch screen monitors and realistic battle simulators all help reinforce the idea that the Army is high tech, and help to connect with the potential recruits who grew up in a technology-oriented environment, he explained.

"The mission is to apply alternative business practices to recruiting," Walters said, and to create innovative programs to enhance the understanding of the Army.

Researching the Future

The director of the Tank and Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center, Dr. Grace Bochenek, said that the Army is researching several types of alternative energy: biodiesel, hydrogen fuel and hydroelectric power

sources. These would help run autonomous vehicles and provide clean, efficient power for the Soldier of the future.

In fact, hybrid-electric power has already been put to use as a power source for the FCS Non-Line of Sight Cannon.

The Army is also working with various representatives from the commercial automotive industry, like GM and Toyota, to research vehicle safety, Bochenek said.

Jeff Parsons of the Army Contracting Command spoke about how new software enables training and experience to be tracked, helping to build a "virtual contracting enterprise" and create better contracting officers.

"[Our job] is to recruit you to help us get the story out," Killion said, asking the audience to spread the word: "That the Army is a high-tech service, that we provide Soldiers with technology that enables them to more effectively do their jobs, and do it safely."



Dr. Thomas Killion, Army deputy assistant secretary for research and technology and chief scientist, gestures to the audience during a presentation Oct. 8 at the Association of the United States Army exhibition.

ACS offering relationship-enhancing classes

by SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

Shopping, whether at the commissary, a department store, or even online, can cause strain in any relationship. These are the times when couples discover their partners' spending habits and flexibility.

As part of domestic violence awareness month, Schweinfurt's Army Community Service (ACS) has designed a series of hands-on classes for couples to work out differences and manage various aspects life together. Through these classes, ACS hopes to emphasize the importance of learning to communicate in and outside of the home about parenting, money, and time spent together.

"We're not just focused on those folks who are married—it could be anyone sharing a

committed relationship," said Billy May, family advocacy program specialist.

Classes began with addressing finances and then continue Oct. 20 from 2-4 p.m. on Askren Manor when the couples will compete in a commissary shopping trip.

"Rather than saying, 'This is how you should talk to your spouse,' let's going through the motions and have examples, and they may be able to learn from each other how to work it out," said Twanna Ivey, installation victim advocate and sexual assault response coordinator.

Couples will be given an imaginary budget to plan a week's worth of meals based on their family size. From that list, they must shop together for each of the ingredients.

The competition is weighed on how the couple communicates, the time in which they complete their task, and how well they stay

within their "budget."

"If you only have \$150 for groceries for the week, you can't be going out getting steak and crab legs ... when you have four kids to take care of," Ivey said, indicating how this competition can truly be a real-life scenario where couples must learn to communicate about finances and food. Additionally, the exercises are designed to help promote understanding.

"Maybe the spouse doesn't understand how hectic it is to go and shop with three or four kids with you (as well as) only having a few dollars to shop," Ivey said.

Couples are also given the opportunity to compete today at the Auto Skills Center on Conn Barracks with the duty of changing a tire. Women may want to sit back and watch during a task like this, but this time the couples must learn to figure it out together.

"We have to put those practical skills back into play," May said, explaining how learning together or teaching one another can offer valuable communication skills in a relationship.

To wrap up the "boot camp for couples" series, ACS offers a class on building a family crest Oct. 28 from 2-4 p.m. As a symbol of the family unit, participants will come away with a special token to hang on the wall at home.

"The command is very, very supportive," when it comes to getting off work to take these classes, May said. "There are people out there looking for various resources and help and that's what we're here for."

Couples may sign up for one or all of the classes offered in October for relationship enhancement. For more information, call ACS at 354-6933 or 09721-96-6933.

173rd marks Freedom Team Salute milestone

Story and photo by
MARK HEETER
Schweinfurt CI Chief

In a process that lasted several days in three military communities in two countries, the first brigade-level Freedom Team Salute commendation officially came to a close when hundreds of Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne) recognized their spouses in a ceremony at Finney Fitness Center here Sept. 24.

The ceremony followed earlier ceremonies in Vicenza, Italy, home of the 173rd Infantry Brigade (Airborne) and Bamberg, Germany, which, like Schweinfurt, houses Sky Soldiers from the 173rd.

"This is an unprecedented ceremony for the Army," said Col. (Ret.) Richard Breen, the Freedom Team Salute European ambassador who was chief of the Army Community Relations and Outreach Division when the program was created in May 2005. Breen presented the idea for a brigade-level recognition to Lisa Preysler, wife

of then-commander Col. Charles Preysler.

"The program was designed specifically to recognize individual Soldiers' personal support system and

to recognize those key individuals who are instrumental in the success of the Soldier and the Army Family," Breen said to the Airborne Cav Soldiers and families packing the center for the ceremony.

The brigade, which recently completed a 15-month tour in Afghanistan, submitted a mass nomination for Freedom Team Salute commendation packets for approximately 1,600 spouses.

"We, as a brigade, took it upon ourselves to nominate every single

spouse in the brigade and to recognize the sacrifices that they went through during the deployment," Lisa Preysler said.

"I think all the Soldiers should

“We ... took it upon ourselves to nominate every single spouse ... to recognize the sacrifices that they went through...”

Lisa Preysler

Wife of Col. Charles Preysler

inviting single Soldiers to nominate someone in their support system – a parent, a friend, a veteran.

At the ceremony here, Soldiers, on cue, presented their spouses with

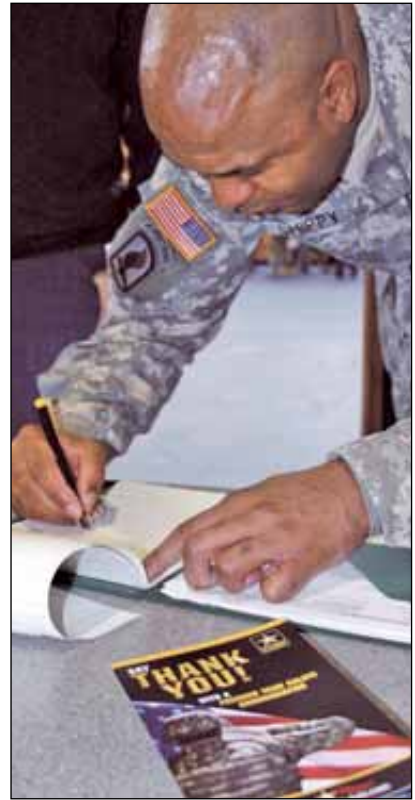
Freedom Team Salute commendation packets, which included a certificate signed by the The Honorable Pete Geren, Secretary of the Army, and Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George. W. Casey, a lapel pin and an Army decal.

"It's nice. It's the first time I felt that the Army recognized the family behind the Soldier," said Hannah Fitz Gerald, after opening the packet she received from her husband, Maj. Darren Fitz Gerald.

"It wraps everything up and says thank you for 15 months of service," she said.

To nominate someone for a Freedom Team Salute commendation packet, log on to www.freedomteamsalute.com, or write to freedomteamsalute@live.com.

Master Sgt. Todd Shippy, 1st Squadron, 91st Cav. Regt. (Airborne), fills out a nomination for a Freedom Team Salute commendation packet at Finney Fitness Center Sept. 24.



CHILD'S PLAY



Photo by Sandra Wilson

Schweinfurt firefighter Wolfgang Keller assists kindergartener Brianna Kloeckl with the fire hose as she aims the water at a model house. Schweinfurt Elementary School students visited the U.S. Garrison Schweinfurt Fire Department on Conn Barracks Oct. 9 as part of National Fire Prevention Week. The tour included viewing the rooms in the fire building, seeing the capabilities of a fire truck, and participating in hosing down a pretend fire.

National Fire Prevention Week has been observed in the U.S. since 1925. The National Fire Prevention Association and volunteers worldwide continue today to make the observances a priority and counts on the participation and efforts of tens of thousands of fire and safety professionals, emergency volunteers, and other individuals working to reduce the risk of fire and the toll it takes on our society.

Adventure-seeking troops living it up with BOSS

by SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

Looking for weekend fun with your friends that is out of the ordinary?

Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers has made adventures in Germany just a step onto a bus away. Whether it's a fright for Halloween that you desire or an evening in the life of a medieval knight, BOSS has the details figured out.

"All of the BOSS trips came about ... to show (single soldiers) a little bit of what Germany has to offer and just to afford them an opportunity to have fun," said Silvia Joiner, recreation specialist and Schweinfurt BOSS advisor.

For some scary Halloween fun, BOSS is now taking sign-ups for the nighttime Frankenstein Castle trip Oct. 25. Tickets bought at SATO Travel on Ledward Barracks are 24 euro and include transportation and entry to the castle.

"It's the biggest haunted castle in Germany," said Joiner, describing how the adult trip will contain some surprises with coffins and a torture chamber. "They do touch you at times."

A family-friendly trip to Frankenstein's Castle is also offered, but during daylight hours Oct. 26. Tickets are reduced for children and the bus leaves at 12:30 p.m.

If Frankenstein is not your thing, the Nov. 8 trip offers an experience as a fearless knight while searching a castle for a lost tour mate and then feasting in a knight's hall complete with court jesters and other entertainment. The bus departs at 10 a.m. to begin the adventure in Kaiserslautern.

Germany may have some of the finest castles with entertainment, but that's not all it boasts. The slopes of the Bavarian Alps offer powdery heaven for avid ski or snowboarders Nov. 21-

23. From bunny hill to the grand Zugspitz, all skill levels are welcome. \$132 covers rooms, breakfast, and dinner.

Participants can almost ski right off the slopes onto a bus to Berlin for a Thanksgiving trip Nov. 27-29. While visiting the former east Germany, vacationers can see what is left of the Berlin wall, visit Checkpoint Charlie, watch "Stars in Concert," and discover Berlin's night life. The price of 229 euro covers transportation,

two overnights with breakfast, three-course Thanksgiving dinner, two city tours, and entrance to the night show.

"BOSS is really important especially overseas like this because ... it provides that sense of feeling at home again for a lot of the Soldiers that are so far away from everything that they are used to," said Pfc. Nathan Daggett of 1st Battalion, 77th Field Artillery and garrison BOSS representative.

December 6 brings another trip for the whole family with

a stream train ride, castle visit, and a cruise on a horse-drawn covered wagon. A bus ride takes participants to Neustadt on the "Wine Strasse" where it all begins. Enjoy wine, water, and pretzels while winding through the vineyards and finish the trip with stop at a winery where coffee and wine-tasting will warm up every traveler.

All trips must have a minimum number of participants, and sign-up deadlines are two weeks before departure. Call DSN 353-8476 or CIV 09721-96-8476 for more information.

"I want to get out there and have as much fun as humanly possible in Germany," said Spc. Robert Beggs of 15th Engineer Battalion and battalion BOSS representative, inviting the community to join him in the upcoming trips. "Schweinfurt is the number one for the BOSS programs, and I will continue to keep that reputation up."

“I want to get out there and have as much fun as humanly possible in Germany.”

Spc. Robert Beggs

15th Eng. Bn. BOSS representative

Fellinger takes charge of Sky Soldiers

NCO leadership handed over to Luman during command overhaul

Story and photo by
KIMBERLY GEARHART
Bavarian News

The Sky Soldiers of Schweinfurt welcomed new leadership this morning, as newly-promoted Col. Christopher Kolenda passed command of the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne) to Lt. Col. Paul Fellinger during a ceremony on Conn Barracks.

Additionally, a change of responsibility transferring the squadron's non-commissioned officer leadership from Command Sgt. Major Victor Pedraza to incoming Sgt. Maj. Kellyjack Luman was performed. The result: a new command team for the Airborne Cav.

Col. Charles Preysler, commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, and under whom the 1st Sqdn, 91st Cav serves, praised Kolenda as a warrior and a scholar.

"It is said that a unit takes on the persona of its commander. Kolenda has built a tremendous, cohesive, strong team," he said. Preysler went on to note that although the Cav is losing a strong leader, it is gaining an "impressive command team" with Fellinger.

Fellinger, although new to the Cav, is no stranger to Airborne operations, having served as the 82nd Airborne Division's chief of operations

during Operation Iraqi Freedom's opening months, and with 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment in multiple capacities throughout his career.

"It is a privilege to assume command of a unit with such a distinguished reputation," Fellinger said of his new command.

Kolenda took time to thank each Troop under his command for their "discipline ... perseverance ... and willingness to defy conventional wisdom" in combating insurgency in Afghanistan. He went on to praise the incoming commander just as highly.

"Paul is a proven combat leader, a first class warrior, and will be an absolutely superb commander," Kolenda said, welcoming Fellinger to his new squadron.

For his part, Fellinger had a two part message.

"To the Troopers of this unit: ... Your selfless service will be a standard by which future generations of Americans are measured.

"To the adversaries of our nation and the free-loving countries of the world: Know that this unit is reloading, and when the time comes to pull the trigger ... we will pursue you with all means available and not stop until we have set the conditions for a world that can exist without fear and terrorism."



Col. Christopher Kolenda (right) outgoing 1st Sqdn., 91st Cav. commander, passes the squadron colors to Col. Charles Preysler, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team commander, during the change of command ceremony. Assuming command is (left) Lt. Col. Paul Fellinger.

Askren Manor prepping for quality of life upgrade

by **KIMBERLY GEARHART**
Bavarian News

Two million dollars.

That's the price tag for an ambitious project to upgrade the streets, parking areas, landscaping, and private refuse containers for four streets in Askren Manor set to begin Oct. 27.

"We have four roads funded where construction will begin: Pine, Spruce, Birch, and Jackson," said Falk Staeublin, engineering chief for the directorate of public works in Schweinfurt.

The upgrades are intended to raise the quality of life of those living in Army housing areas in Schweinfurt, said Helga Deherrera, acting housing chief.

Enclosed, private garbage cans; improved, aesthetically pleasing walkways; better lighting; and landscaping changes are all part of the overarching plan.

According to Manfred Brunner, furnishings branch chief, the upgrades are in line with the Army Family Housing Master Plan, as proposed in 2003.

"The plan is a goal, and



Courtesy photo

Planned improvements include private trash bins, hand-laid walkways similar to those on Ledward Barracks, and general landscaping changes, not unlike this Bamberg neighborhood.

implementation depends on our budget," Brunner said.

Staeublin noted that while the housing areas are not out of compliance with regulations, the upgrades will improve living conditions as intended by the housing plan and the Army Family Covenant.

The covenant promises improvements to Soldier and family housing as a method of ensuring Soldiers and their families with a "Quality of Life that is commensurate with their service."

By sinking millions into family

housing areas, the Schweinfurt community is following through on that promise.

"There will be inconveniences, as there always are with construction," said Deherrera, adding that she believes families will find the end result worth the trouble.

Although parking areas will have to be relocated as the street-by-street plan is phased in, walkways to each stairwell will remain easily accessible.

"And if someone has to move, we will, of course, let the moving truck come in, but for safety reasons, we can not allow (privately owned vehicles) into the construction area," Staeublin said.

The first street scheduled to undergo construction is Pine Street, and residents there should begin to see construction of a provisional parking area soon.

As each phase nears, affected residents will be notified by mail.

"They will each receive a letter advising of when construction will begin as well as giving residents a point of contact in case they have questions about the changes," Brunner said.

Future construction is funded—to the tune of another three million dollars—for more areas in Askren Manor, said Staeublin, but for now, those upgrades are in the beginning stages of planning.

CFC kicks off, now accepting donations with 100 percent goal

Garrison reached 90 percent participation during '07 campaign

Story by **MARK HEETER**
Schweinfurt CI Chief

The Combined Federal Campaign-Overseas has begun and runs through Dec. 3, giving federal employees an opportunity to donate to the charity of their choice.

The USAG Schweinfurt collected enough donations in 2007 to earn second place in the CFC-O campaign in Europe, according to Deborah Lawson, administrative services branch chief with the USAG Schweinfurt Directorate of Human Resources.

"Last year we reached about 90 percent (participation), and we raised over \$84,000," Lawson said, adding that the goal for 2008 is 100

percent participation and \$100,000.

The CFC has given federal employees an opportunity to donate since the 1960s. Soldiers, civilians and contractors are eligible to make donations to any of hundreds of recipient organizations.

"The mission of the CFC is to support and to promote philanthropy through a voluntary program that is employee-focused, cost-efficient and effective in providing all Federal employees the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all," according to the CFC-Overseas home page at www.cfcoverseas.org/AboutCFCO.

Most tenant units in Schweinfurt have representatives who have been trained and are prepared to offer assistance with donations,

Lawson said, though anyone is welcome to stop and see Enilda Flores-Cabrera in room 104 of Bldg. 206 on Ledward Barracks to make a donation.

"We have unity representatives that we train. They work with their unit to administer the forms, and then they return back to us with the money that they collected," Lawson said.



Photo by Sandra Wilson

Fifth-grader Corwin Archield enjoys the free rides at Schweinfurt's community showcase Oct. 3. Agency tables brought information to the attendees, and food and games were offered for everyone. Rob Ryan, Kojak, Schweinfurt's Rising Star winner, and the Redskins Cheerleaders performed that evening.

FluMist vaccine available in clinics now

Europe Regional Medical Command

FluMist® influenza vaccine has arrived at Army medical clinics throughout Europe, and all authorized beneficiaries are encouraged to get immunized.

Army medical officials report there is a sufficient amount of influenza vaccination available this year. Authorized beneficiaries should contact their local Army medical clinic to learn about its influenza immunization schedule.

Vaccination is mandatory for all active duty military personnel, DoD civilians designated as emergency essential and reserve personnel on active duty.

TRICARE beneficiaries will also be offered the vaccine to protect against influenza and its severe complications.

“Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses,” said Col. Theresa Moser, chief of the Europe Regional Medical Command’s Force Health Protection Office which oversees the immunization program.

“The best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated every year and practice good hand hygiene,” said Moser.

She advises people to wash their hands frequently, avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth and to use hand sanitizers frequently when soap and

Availability by Location

Maj. Michael Ronn, Chief, Pharmacy Director for Bavaria MEDDAC, announced that flu vaccine will be available to all military community members at each of the BMEDDAC health clinics. Times and dates vary. Please see information below for your specific community:

Bamberg: A flu vaccine clinic will be Oct. 26 - 31 from 1-4 p.m. on a walk-in basis. A flu clinic in the elementary and high school is being scheduled with dates TBA.

Grafenwoehr: Walk-in basis during regular Immunizations Clinic hours. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. from Mon. to Wed.; 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Thurs.; 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Fri.

Hohenfels: Beginning Oct. 27 flu vaccine will be available at the Immunizations Clinic during regular hours Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri. from 8 -11:45 a.m. and 1 - 4:30 p.m.; and on Thurs. from 1 - 4:30 p.m. Flu vaccines will also be available at the Health Fair Oct. 30.

Illesheim: From Oct. 28-31, flu vaccine will be available on a walk-in basis from 1:30 -4 p.m.

Katterbach: Beginning Oct. 27, flu vaccine will be available at the Immunizations Clinic during regular hours. Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri. from 8 - 11 a.m./1 - 3:30 p.m.; and Thurs. from 8:30 - 11:00 a.m. Look for fliers in the Katterbach/Ansbach area.

Schweinfurt: Beginning Oct. 27, flu vaccine will be at the Immunizations Clinic during regular hours Mon. to Fri. from 8 - 11:30 a.m. and 1 - 3:30 p.m.

Vilseck: Flu vaccine will be offered on a walk-in basis to the clinic from 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri. and Thurs. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The clinic will not provide the vaccine on training holidays/federal holidays/weekends.

water are not available.

Flu season typically extends each year from October to May.

Moser said the type of vaccine an individual receives will depend on age and contributing health factors, as determined during careful pre-vaccination screening at an immunization clinic.

For the 2008-2009 influenza season, the Department of Defense

has contracted for a total of 3.5 million influenza doses, including 1.9 million doses of inactivated (injectable) vaccine and 1.6 million doses of live attenuated (intranasal) vaccine. Distribution of intranasal vaccine started in August, and injectable vaccine shipments will start in the near future.

FluMist®, an intranasal vaccine approved for 2-49 year olds, is now

available at Army medical clinics in Europe. It is a live, but weakened, influenza vaccine sprayed into the nose.

Injectable vaccine has not yet arrived at Army health clinics in Europe, but is expected in the near future, according to officials at the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Center-Europe.

Injectable vaccine, an inactivated

protein-derived vaccine given by intramuscular injection, may be used for those with medical conditions that preclude the use of FluMist®, such as pregnancy or certain allergies, or where intranasal vaccine is unavailable due to logistical constraints.

Pediatric injectable vaccine will be administered to children ages 6-23 months. Injectable vaccine will also be administered to beneficiaries over 49 years old and those patients for whom FluMist® has not been recommended.

Studies have shown that both the injectable vaccine and the nasal spray vaccine are safe and effective at preventing influenza.

This year’s goal is to immunize 95 percent or more of the U.S. Army Europe active duty population by December 31.

Members of the active force can expect to receive information from their units. Other beneficiaries should contact their local health clinic.

The Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta publishes guidelines for influenza vaccinations, and the Army will follow those guidelines in its annual campaign.

For more general information on influenza and the benefits of receiving the annual vaccination, visit the CDC Web site at www.cdc.gov/flu/ or www.vaccines.mil/flu.

Physical therapy: it’s all about movement!

by MATT STEHR
USAMEDDAC Bavaria PT Consultant

October is National Physical Therapy Month and this year the American Physical Therapy Association members nationwide are celebrating movement.

Physical therapists are the movement experts. Movement is essential to our everyday lives. They assist millions of Americans in managing or eliminating neck or back pain.

Physical therapists help children who have cerebral palsy improve their overall function and participation in life. They work with people who have had a stroke or an amputation regain their independence. Physical therapists help people move forward.

Having the ability to move safely and effectively is crucial in the military. Today, the Army Medical Specialist Corps is made up of physical therapists, occupational therapists, dietitians, and physician assistants.

Physical Therapy is an integral part of the Army health care system. Not only do

therapists take care of Soldiers’ aches and pains, they take care of family members and dependents as well.

To honor this long tradition of service and to celebrate Physical Therapy Month, I wanted to share how we’ve grown over the past year and what we have to offer members of the Bavaria military communities.

We currently have six physical therapists that serve Bavaria, and are located in Grafenwoehr, Vilseck, Schweinfurt, Katterbach and Bamberg. While some of our team has been deployed in support of OIF, we have added two physical therapists and two technicians to the Grafenwoehr PT Clinic that opened this spring. It is well-equipped, well-staffed, and can provide a wide range of therapy services. Our clinic in Vilseck will soon undergo significant renovations with improved space and equipment.

Patients are seen at the PT clinics by appointment. Just stop by your provider for a referral to the Physical Therapy clinic; and then an appointment can be made. Services

include traction, therapeutic exercise, post-operative care, pain management, sports medicine as well as heat, ultrasound and electrical stimulation.

We offer “Injury Prevention during Unit Physical Training” classes to units and during the Warrior Leadership Course.

Classes about ergonomics and low back injury prevention can also be taught to units, offices/departments, or on a one-on-one basis.

Other class topics include: osteoporosis and exercise, wellness and the military retiree, sports and play safety for kids, civilian injury prevention, coaching safety, and a running shoe clinic.

So as you celebrate Physical Therapy Month, please remember to move more, eat less, work hard, play smart, be safe, and enjoy life to the fullest.

For more information on classes, or any comments, questions, or concerns regarding this article or physical therapy in the Grafenwoehr or Vilseck communities, contact Matthew Stehr at matthew.stehr@amedd.army.

[mil](mailto:matthew.stehr@amedd.army) or call DSN 476-3322 (CIV 09662-83-3322).

Bavaria MEDDAC Physical Therapy Clinics are located in communities listed below. PT clinic info is as follows:

Bamberg: Mon. to Fri. from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Building 7253. DSN 469.7793/CIV

Grafenwoehr: 7:15 am to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Mon., Tues., Wed., and Friday; 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, DSN 475.5644 /CIV 09641.83.5644.

Katterbach: 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mon., Tues., Wed., and Friday, Thurs. 7:00 to 11:30 a.m. DSN 467.2680/3661/CIV 09802.83.2680/3661.

Schweinfurt: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. DSN: 354.6561.

Vilseck: 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Mon., Tues., Wed., and Friday; 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Thursday; in the Health Clinic annex. DSN 476.3322/CIV 09662.83.3322.



HALLOWEEN DRAWING CONTEST

If you are between the age of 3 and 12, drop off your Halloween drawing at the Vilseck Health clinic. The best 3 drawings will be rewarded with a prize.

Drawings will be accepted from October 1st to October 29th.

Vilseck Health Clinic services reduced through November for 2d SCR reintegration

BMEDDAC

Due to the medical needs of the returning 2SCR Soldiers, the Vilseck Clinic will have reduced services during October and November.

We will continue to provide some well-baby and well-woman appointments, but the majority of our appointment openings will be for same day, acute issues.

The clinic hours evening hours will be shortened to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from Oct. 15- Nov. 12 due to reduced clinic staffing.

We will continue to utilize our German providers to ensure good access for our Tricare

Prime patients.

We apologize for the inconvenience this may cause, but we’re very excited to be part of the welcome home for our returning Stryker warriors.

Please remember to utilize some of the TRICARE services available to you such our pharmacy self care over-the-counter products for beneficiaries over the age of 6. See our pharmacy staff for these items.

Patients are also encouraged to use the Tricare Nurse Advice Line for ailments that may not require the use of appointment times and only require good self-care patient instructions (toll free 00800 4759 2330).

2SCR's first wave welcomed home

Rear D commander praises unit for long lasting impact in Iraq

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to Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

The unit also conducted careful analysis and targeting in Abu Ghraib which led to the recovery of the remains of U.S. Army Reserve Soldier Staff Sgt. Keith Maupin. The unit also helped return the remains home. Those actions, Zeck said, exemplifies the Army value of never leaving a fallen comrade.

"The long-lasting impact of 2SCR's deployment," said Regiment Rear Detachment Commander Lt. Col. Thomas Rickard, "is the transition of former al-Qaeda and other criminal hotbeds where 2SCR was able to gain control and provide security until Iraqi Security Forces were able to take the lead."

The transition, he said, "would not have been possible without the contributions of both 2SCR and our Iraqi allies."

Rickard, whose wife deployed with the troops, said family and community members also contributed to the success of the deployment.

Their support resulted in thousands of hours of volunteer work, boosting troop morale through care packages, the creation of an internal support system through family readiness groups, and fostering strong connections with community agencies, as well as helping other 2SCR family members when needed.

"Their support was immeasurable," Rickard said. "I am personally thankful

for all the spouses who not only took care of their families while their Soldiers were in harm's way, but helped their neighbors to solve problem, too."

Following their return home, Soldiers will undergo a seven-day reintegration program of welfare education and inspections to transition Soldiers from a combat to a garrison environment.

During this time, Soldiers will attend half-day training modules which include driver's testing, records update, and medical and dental screenings.

Soldiers will also undergo Battlemind training, communication classes, suicide prevention training, and family reunion guidance and information.

To help ensure a safe transition, redeployed the Soldiers' alcohol intake and travel distances will be limited while they become reacquainted with operating motor vehicles and the local community, Rickard said.

Regimental Soldiers are scheduled for block leave from the end of November through early January 2009.

Last week's 50 troops brings the total number of 2SCR's redeployed Soldiers to 62.

All of the remaining troops are expected back before the community-wide Nov. 25 welcome home celebration and the memorial dedication for 26 of the unit's fallen comrades.



You're my hero!

Briana Melton, 3, waits for her father Cpt. Marc Melton, Headquarters & Headquarters Troop, 4th Squadron, 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment, during his welcome home ceremony Oct. 8 in Vilseck.

Melton was one of 50 2SCR Soldiers who arrived in Grafenwoehr last week to the cheers and tears of family and friends.

The unit is wrapping up a 15-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Photo by Mary Markos

Grafenwoehr earns Best Practices Quality of Life award

continued from Page 1

decorations for rooms in the Warrior in Transition Unit barracks, established opportunities for WTU Soldiers to connect with a sponsor for personal interaction, provided Warriors in Transition and their families discounts and free events, and provided Soldiers meaningful employment that is mentally stimulating and promotes healing.

Superior Quality of Life

Award (medium installation):

U.S. Army Garrison, Mannheim, Germany - The USAG Mannheim Garrison Command Team demonstrated its commitment to giving residents quality facilities in return for their

dedication to the U.S. Army, and making Soldier and Family Quality of Life commensurate with their sacrifices and service. Facilities include a youth skate park, and environmentally approved car wash.

Superior Quality of Life Award

(small installation):

U.S. Army Garrison, Brussels, Belgium - The Brussels' Information Fair provides information to garrison residents pertaining to essential services that are only available off post, such as banking and church services. The ease and quality of information provided at these fairs improves the Quality of Life for the Soldiers and families assigned to USAG Brussels, the smallest

IMCOM-Europe garrison.

Quality of Life Award for Best Practices:

U.S. Army Garrison, Grafenwoehr, Germany - For less than \$100, Grafenwoehr developed a program called "Dumping Debt During Deployments," a financial education program designed to educate the Total Army Family while Soldiers are deployed, and to take advantage of the extra funds earned through the Soldier's deployment.

The Dumping Debt During Deployment is a program focused on savings and investing for future goals.

Command Team Quality of Life

Award:

Military Intelligence Readiness Command - The commanding general, Brig. Gen. Leslie A. Purser, personally took on the task of establishing a Family Programs Office to ensure the initiatives contained in the Army Family Covenant were delivered to Soldiers and their families across the Reserve Command. No family program existed before October 2007, and this gave families the skills and tools they needed to improve readiness.

"The All-Volunteer Force is a national treasure ... it is succeeding because of the extraordinary work our families and civilian community members continue to do," Geren said.

Halloween events scheduled at Army garrisons throughout Europe

continued from Page 1

Community Center. The event will include children that attend the Protestant and Catholic services and those living in the Breitenau Housing Area.

Oct. 31: Trick-or-Treat and Truck-or-Treat from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Trunk-or-Treat allows community members who do not live on post to park their cars and pass out candy.

■ GRAF/VILSECK:

Oct. 25: Annual Child and Youth Services Harvest Fest at the Rose Barracks School Age Services, Bldg. 2237, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Enjoy a fun day of activities which includes a pumpkin patch, pumpkin decorating, Arts & Crafts activities, face painting and much more.

For more information, call DSN 476-2760.

Oct. 31: Halloween Costume Party and Karaoke at the Zone Sports Bar. The fun begins at 6 p.m. and goes until 2 a.m. Everyone dressed in scary Halloween costumes will be entered for the chance to win prizes! DJ MCM will mix frightening tunes to keep the night interesting. For more information, call DSN 476-2360.

Oct. 31: Trunk or Treat, set to coincide with on-post trick-or-treating, allows community members living off post or in barracks to decorate

the trunk of their car and dress up to give out candy on Halloween. Trick-or-treaters will come to the library parking lots as they do in the housing areas to fill their treat bags. Register to hand out candy from your car at the library by calling DSN 475-1740 or DSN 476-1740.

Oct. 31: A Harvest Fest will be held from 3-5 p.m. at the Grafenwoehr Field house. For more information, call DSN 475-1570.

Oct. 31: Trick-or-Treating. Times still to be determined. Check Grafenwoehr's electronic newsletter, the Command Information Channel and AFN-radio for the latest information.

TBA: Read the weekly garrison newsletter for information on the Joint Multinational Command's annual Haunted House.

■ HOHENFELS:

Oct. 31: The Chapel Congregation's Hallelujah Harvest Fest is the perfect alternative to Halloween, or a way to continue the fun after trick-or-treating is over. Everyone is invited to from 6 - 8 p.m. at the Community Activities Center. There will be a chili cook-off, hot dogs and snacks, a costume contest, door prizes, games, crafts, and more. Call DSN 466-3473 for information.

Oct. 31: Spooky creatures await you during the Monster Fest, hosted

by the Garrison Hohenfels library, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. in The Zone. Compete in a costume contest and enjoy games and activities like face-painting, body boppers, piñata, and more. Call DSN 466-1740 for information.

Oct. 31: Trick-or-Treating. Times still to be determined. Check the Hohenfels news briefs and Hometown Happenings for the latest information.



Photo by John Reese

Stay tuned to your local media outlets for the trick-or-treat times at your installation.

This October, Ansbach FMWR is brewing up some Halloween Fun!

25 October | Halloween Hustle Fun Run
Wear your costume for a race with a spooky twist!
Bunch Fitness Center, Storch Barracks. Kids 1-Miler at 0900. 5k at 1000. Register by 22 October.

31 October | Community Library Halloween Bash
Very Scary! Join this family costume party for refreshments and a scary good time!
Starts at 1600 at Storch Barracks Community Library (4th Floor, above the CMR)

31 October | Bowling Costume Party
Prizes for best costumes! Bring your friends & family to enjoy pizza specials.
Starts at 1800 at Apache Lanes Bowling Center, Storch Barracks. No fee for costume contest.

31 October | Halloween Parent & Child 40-Frame Game Tournament
Bowling for creepy kids and petrified parents! Costumes and prizes!
Starts at 1800 at Action Lanes, Hatterbach. Register by 30 October. Cost: \$15.

31 October | Trunk or Treat
Feed the spooks and goblins! Trick or Treaters snag snacks from the trunks of cars.
1700-2000. In Hatterbach, at Hangar #2. In Storch Barracks at Dental Clinic Parking Lot.

31 October | BOSS Community Haunted House
A Haunted House in the BOSS Facility. Not for the weak at heart!
1800-2100. Bismarck BOSS Facility. Cost: Donate a "BOSS Morale-Booster Item" to send to a single soldier downrange.

For more information, email us at:
ans-mwr@eur.army.mil

Sports

PIGSKIN PREVIEW

Lions maul Falcons' top seed hope

Heidelberg puts abrupt end to Vilseck's perfect season, snagging top spot

by ADRIANE FOSS

Editor

The Vilseck High School Falcons' sudden 27-7 loss to the Heidelberg Lions Saturday morning was a painful reminder of how tenuous a triumphant football season can be.

Moments before kickoff, Vilseck was 3-0 and hanging their hopes on a Div. 1 top seed ranking once they defeated Heidelberg with the startling precision that allowed them to romp Kaiserlautern 21-6, Ramstein 21-14, and the International School of Brussels 34-10 earlier in the season.

The loss came as a bitter surprise

for the Falcons and the fans who have followed VHS's Cinderella season, thanks in part to an all-star coaching staff, to its tainted near-finale.

For others, the sudden loss was expected, long overdue for a team that had defied all odds as it cruised toward a perfect season, shutting down other football powerhouses in its first year of Div. 1 play.

"Yesterday was one of those days the team we coached all year just didn't show up," said VHS Head Coach Jim Hall the morning after the team's loss.

Vilseck flubbed opportunities to score during the first half when

they had the ball twice inside their opponent's 5-yard line. In total, VHS had eight plays inside Heidelberg's 5 during the first half, but were unable to take control, ending the half at 13-0.

Vilseck breathed a short-lived sigh of relief when wide receiver Jamal Grant took the opening kickoff at the top of the second half and ran it 80 yards back for the Falcon's lone touchdown.

But Heidelberg's defense would not be overcome, pinning Vilseck for the remainder of the game.

Heidelberg's Alex Savusa led his team with eight solo tackles and five assists, followed by Chris Cuthbert's

seven tackles.

Vilseck tailback Nieko Carr carried the ball 19 times for 79 yards, followed closely by tailback Angelo Anderson's 7 carries for 77 yards.

"Our defense was on the field the whole day," said Hall, of the team's futile attempt to gain a foothold. "Angelo Hall blocked the punt and had 10 tackles on defense; TJ Blount had 11 tackles on defense... I thought they did an outstanding job of trying to keep us in the game."

Not quite sure where Vilseck went wrong, Hall said he would spend Columbus Day studying the game film. And if they win Saturday's

game against Stuttgart, Vilseck will battle it out against a team they've already defeated once this season - Ramstein or Kaiserslautern - during the Oct. 25 semifinals.

What are the odds of a triumphant comeback for the Falcons?

If their 2008 fairytale rise and fall is any indication, the answer is clear: Anything, anything at all, is possible.



Hall

ARMY ADVENTURE

WAQ helping Soldiers return to normalcy with high-adventure activity

by ROB MCILVAINE

FMWRC Public Affairs

The slowly changing attitudes about PTSD, known as battle fatigue since WWII and post traumatic stress syndrome since Vietnam, are now getting a much needed shot in the arm with the combination of Leader Training, Warrior Adventure Quest and Battlemind-After Action Review.

More importantly, the boring "debriefing" of long ago is fast becoming the reality of a high-adventure recreation activity to help Soldiers transition to "New Normal" and reduce the potential for high-risk behaviors that are counter-productive to unit training requirements.

"In the past," said John O'Sullivan, Outdoor Recreation Program Manager at Family and MWR Command, "Soldiers did not talk about their experiences during war. Consequently, the new guys didn't gain much knowledge about what to expect because of this stoicism. The idea behind WAQ is to break down these communication barriers."

The Army, through a partnership between the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command and the Office of the Surgeon General, tested WAQ with three pilot programs in September.

Units participating in the pilot include the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry in Vicenza, Italy; the Virginia National Guard Soldiers of C Company, 3rd Battalion, 11th Brigade Combat Team from Manassas and Leesburg, Va; and Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team at Fort Lewis, Wash.

"Ultimately, the Army will be offering this one-day program for all returning Soldiers," O'Sullivan said. The target group is Soldiers in RESET - a period from 40 to 90 days

after returning."

Normally, Soldiers returning from combat are reunited with their platoon (about 30 Soldiers) after seven to 10 days of decompression time and 30 days of block leave.

In Vicenza, Italy, paratroopers from the 173rd ABCT recently returned from block leave following a 15-month tour in Afghanistan.

"Instead of hearing the same briefs over and over again, falling asleep and getting in trouble, this was perfect," said Spc. Mathew Cannon, a 20-year-old 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company Soldier from Sapulpa, Okla. "Some people might learn from a class, but everyone learns from getting out of the classroom and doing it."

Activities held during the first day centered on white-water rafting in the Noce River, as "First Rock" Soldiers navigated extreme waves, experienced defensive and aggressive swimming, and completed group river crossings.

On the second day, Cannon and his platoon mates enjoyed a paintball outing on Woodsball Field located near Padova, Italy. Small teams competed against each other on a course designed with trees and plywood obstacles. Activities included instruction on state-of-the-art paintball equipment, playing techniques, team communication, cover-and-fire, and team movement.

"This was a well-planned, well-organized event that really motivated the Soldiers," said Sgt. 1st Class James Knight, platoon sergeant for Bravo Company's 2nd Platoon. "A lot of Soldiers got on the bus not knowing what to expect, but they came away with a new perspective. The Soldiers really enjoyed themselves and I had a blast," said Knight, 26, from Monroeville, Ala.

On the final day, they began their morning with roughly 30 miles

of mountain biking on nearby hills and roads.

"We got a chance to do something fun together as a platoon - versus other deployments when there was nothing out there for us when we returned," said Staff Sgt. Dabian E. Harris, 29, from Bravo Company's 1st Platoon. "Mountain biking is a great way to see Vicenza, and I am definitely going to do it again," added the native of La Quinta, Calif.

Ultimately, this is the point of WAQ. Incorporate team building with skills learned or reinforced and come away with an enhanced lifetime of leisure for a better quality of life.

"After the Soldiers learn these high adrenaline-producing skills with their platoon buddies in a safe environment," noted O'Sullivan, "they'll want to continue doing them whenever they get the chance. This should reduce the amount of high-risk behavior activities Soldiers are currently using to get an 'adrenalin fix.'"

The second WAQ pilot began when a company of Virginia National Guard Soldiers were bussed to Pennsylvania's Youghiogheny River and changed out of their Army Combat Uniforms and into their Physical Fitness Uniforms. After a safety briefing, they stepped into their rafts and moments later, thanks to the raging whitewaters of the Yough, many were tossed from the rafts into the rapids.

Teamwork immediately took over as Soldiers paddled their way over to the ejected crewmembers and recovered them from the rough waters with ease.

"The teamwork was so strong," said Spc. James Anderson, 1st Platoon, "that Soldiers from other boats were recovering capsized buddies from other teams."

After many adrenaline-boosting hours of fun, the Soldiers returned to their base of operations to conduct a Battlemind-AAR (After Action Review) in accordance with the WAQ guidelines. Battlemind-AAR is a debriefing session designed to assist in mitigating the cumulative effects of sustained operations while mentally preparing the team to reintegrate and begin focused training for the next requirement.

The concept was developed by behavioral health professionals in the Army's Battlemind program based on recommendations from an Integrated Process Team that included health professionals in the offices of the Surgeon General, and officials from the Combat Readiness & Safety Center, the Army National Guard, the Morale Welfare and Recreation Command, the Installation Management Command and the Army Reserve component.

During the Battlemind-AAR after rafting, Soldiers were asked to discuss the day's events and point out the connections between the activities and the everyday missions of being deployed in a combat environment.

All agreed that the main thing they observed during the trip was the amount of teamwork involved, just as

it would be in combat. "There were numerous times I almost fell out of the raft," said Staff Sgt. Bennie Jost, platoon sergeant of 1st Platoon, "but my buddy reached out and grabbed me. Not only was he focused on the mission, but he was focused on my well being."

As a testament to the unit's strong sense of teamwork, Pfc. James Self said, "We flipped our boat in the first five minutes, but we never flipped it again because we built a good team quickly and learned from our mistakes."

This event provided the Soldiers with an opportunity to identify both

strengths on which they could capitalize and shortcomings they could minimize in not only themselves, but in each other, as well. Recognizing that those skills were useful outside of combat will enhance their team-building in a calmer, safer garrison environment.

"We want our Soldiers looking out for each other, on and off the battlefield," O'Sullivan said.

The final pilot took place at Fort Lewis, Wash., where Brigadier General John Johnson, who provided initial leadership with WAQ as the Deputy Commander of Family and MWR, is now the Deputy Commanding General of 1st Corps and Fort Lewis.

The day began at 6 a.m. Sept. 22 with Sgt. Maj. Tammy Coon, senior enlisted advisor of FMWRC's Soldier Programs and Community Recreation introducing the WAQ program to the Soldiers. Major Ed Brusher from the Office of the Surgeon General, who recently returned from a 15-month deployment to Iraq, also briefed the Soldiers of the 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division Stryker Brigade Combat Team, who also recently returned back to the U.S. from a 14-month deployment in Iraq. Brusher described how Battlemind ties into Warrior Adventure Quest.

While WAQ provides the "hook" to capture the Soldier's interest, Battlemind-AAR is the Army's newly developed "Armor for the Mind." It helps Soldiers recognize and respond to fear during combat, mitigates the cumulative effects of a sustained combat environment, and assists them to become mentally prepared to reintegrate during the redeployment, post-deployment and reset portions of the deployment cycle.

One of the main activities for the first morning at Fort Lewis was Battlemind training for Soldiers, staff sergeant and above. After learning how to lead an After Action Review, two were selected from each platoon

to perform the AAR after the group activities.

As 8 a.m. approached and the anticipation level rose, it was up in the air for 27 Soldiers who had the opportunity to tandem skydive into a perfect blue sky near Seattle, while another group went down to the river for whitewater rafting in the majestic, sparkling waters.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, both groups travelled out through the emerald green forest at the base of Mount St. Helens for more whitewater rafting and bungee jumping from a 20-story-high bridge, the highest bungee jumping bridge in the country.

All involved with the three pilot programs in Vicenza, Italy; Leesburg, Va; and Fort Lewis, Wash.; agreed the program was a resounding success, both from the perspectives of those who helped develop WAQ and from the Soldiers who were the first to give their feedback on the program.

Officials will use survey and assessment tools to evaluate the program's effectiveness, including statistics from the Combat Readiness/Safety Center, the Reintegration Unit Risk Inventory, the Unit Behavioral Health Needs Assessment, and a new online survey, the Warrior Adventure Quest User Survey.

WAQ is centrally funded through the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command, with oversight from the Installation Management Command and regional MWR recreation managers.

Planning is under way to bring WAQ to an additional 24 Army garrisons over the next year, and the long-term goal is to have every BCT participate in WAQ within 90 days of their redeployment from a combat environment.

Training and Doctrine Command officials said it costs the Army \$54,700 to train a basic combat arms Soldier, and as much as \$67,000 for other military occupational specialties, depending on the length of their advanced individual training.

Since there's no way to put a dollar value on a Soldier's life, determining a return on investment for this project is difficult. However, the average cost per person to participate in WAQ is only \$86 - less than it costs to fill the fuel tank of a Humvee.

The Army plans to cycle nearly 80,000 Soldiers through WAQ over the next year, at a cost of just under \$7 million. If it cuts the fatality rate in half, it will have paid for itself, officials said, and if it saves just one Soldier's life, it will be worth the effort.



U.S. Army photo

Soldiers from the 503rd Infantry in Vicenza, Italy, shoot the rapids as part of the Warrior Adventure Quest event.